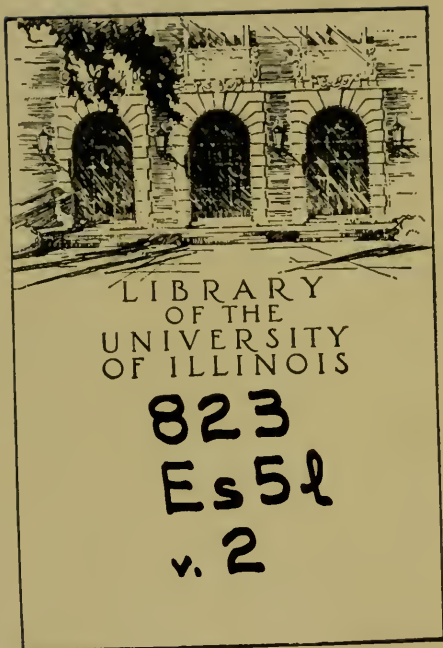




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A LIFE'S HAZARD;
OR,
THE OUTLAW OF WENTWORTH WASTE.

VOL. II.



A LIFE'S HAZARD;

OR,

THE OUTLAW OF WENTWORTH WASTE.

BY HENRY ESMOND.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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A LIFE'S HAZARD;

OR,

THE OUTLAW OF WENTWORTH WASTE.



CHAPTER I.

“HAVE I interfered with your interesting occupation?” inquired Vincent Darecourt, of the cowering Brien Flynn.

“Indade, sir, I wor only attindin’ an Misther——”

“I do not wish to hear what you were doing,” interposed the heir of Darecourt, “although you looked confoundedly alarmed, for no visible reason except that you saw me.”

The agent’s natural composure was fast returning: Well, ye see, sir, as how I

thought ye wor in England, an' 'tis no wondher I grew frightind like ; bud Misther Vincent, didn't ye meet the other gintleman, Misther——”

“ I met no person, nor do I wish to see any one but my father,” he interposed in a petulant tone, adding, “ Where is Lord Darecourt at present ? ”

“ His Lordship's in the ould oak room to the lift, where he gineraly sits at this time, but av ye plaze, sir, I'll show ye the door.”

“ No, no, thanks ; I will find my way without your assistance. Who receives the letters from the post ? ” This question was asked very abruptly, completely throwing Flynn off his guard.

“ I do,” replied the agent.

“ Do you also post them ? ”

“ I do, yer honour.”

“ At all times ? ”

“Yis, Misther Vincent.”

“Are you certain there is no one else entrusted with this office?”

“No wan, I alone hould the kay for lockin’ or anlockin’ the post-bag.”

“Thank you, that is all I wish to know,” responded the young heir, leaving the room.

“Oh me sthars,” pondered Flynn, “havn’t I sed an unlucky thing about thim litthers; shure now they’ll know who inthersiptid thim, bad scran to me misforthin. Oh dear, oh dear.”

Vincent Darecourt’s repeated knock at the door of his father’s apartment being still unanswered, he turned the handle softly, and letting himself in stood facing the Lord of Darecourt, who was fast asleep.

What agitating thoughts came to that observer from the clouded past. A dim

remembrance of having seen that face when there were none of those time freighted lines rendering it so severe ; when also another of soft benevolence was linked with the picture, the form of his mother growing up on the green page of memory. But now this unconscious sleeper alone remained, and Vincent thought, does the departed keep watch over the one left behind in his declining years, or can she know that her only child is here to wake a father's listless heart to duty if not affection ?

Oblivious of being the subject of so much thought and speculation, the prematurely aged Lord Darecourt still dozed and dreamed.

There was the maid of his choice, noble born, and looking nobility in her every lineament and deportment, as, accompanied by a large retinue, she stands

before the altar to become his spouse ; then they were happy, their hearts' union being strengthened by the birth of their only son Vincent ; but alas, while the child grew in vigour and comeliness, so did his mother waste and pine, slowly ebbing away in peace and tranquillity—from life's changing scenes.

All this was accurately reviewed by the deep thinker in his somnolent reverie, and yet he dreamed further.

“ Where was now this child ? had he fulfilled his pledge to that dying wife ever to tend and foster the boy for her sake ?

“ No,” he thought, “ I have neglected my duty both to you and him, not even remembering the trust so warmly accepted.

“ Take care that you do not imperil his future by longer neglect ; abandon such selfishness and fulfil those overdue obliga-

tions to the dead ere it be too late," seemed to vibrate through his veins in some untoward inexplicable manner, when, starting up, perturbed and acrimonious from the unpleasant theme, Lord Darecourt found his son mutely regarding him.

"What do I behold?" exclaimed the agitated parent, rubbing his bleared eyes. "Is it a mystification, or is it really you, Vincent?"

"Vincent, father," was softly answered.

"So I now perceive; I was just dreaming unpleasantly of you, but what do such fancies signify? Nothing," and he attempted to laugh.

"For the last twenty minutes I have stood in this place, not wishing to interfere with your slumber."

"Quite right, every one is forbidden to disturb me." From his testy manner and speech, it became evident that the

nobleman was fast reverting to his normal self; he inquired, "What brought you home without my licence, sir, a course with which I am much dissatisfied?"

"Dear father, I wrote you thrice in so many weeks, setting forth my reasons for desiring to return, but no answer came, although a reply was entreated. Nor have I heard from you since last we parted."

"Come, sir, be guarded in what you say, it is my turn to complain and to insist upon knowing why I have not had any communication from you, or even the ordinary civility of an acknowledgment to my several letters."

"Father, there is some serious mystery involved herein. I protest solemnly I have not once heard from you, though having frequently written, appealing for an answer."

“ Silence, boy ; indulge in no more misrepresentations, whilst correctly describing what I have to complain of, and you could as easily account for unpardonable neglect were you so disposed.”

“ I am sorry, my lord, that my positive assurance will not insure credence.”

“ Abandon this unbecoming conduct, sir, you cannot deceive me,”—his lordship was growing warm.

“ I am incapable of the attempt, father ; we have both been grievously wronged, and I will endeavour to find a solution of the mystery.”

“ The thought is absurd ; what motive would any one have in attempting to interfere between Lord Darecourt and his son ? ” the old man tried to smile, but his tenuous lips forbade the effort.

“ The consideration is a very simple one,” was replied ; “ we both wrote at

various times, as none of these letters came to hand they must have been abstracted by some one or other intent on causing a misunderstanding between us.”

“I will not be trifled with, sir; you shall now see the agent, who is responsible for all my correspondence, a sufficient testimony as to his being worthy of implicit reliance. Touch that bell, please, and then judge for yourself. Tell Mr. Flynn I wish to see him.”

“Yes, me lord,” replied the domestic, leaving the apartment.

The deputy speedily afterwards entered, looking the quintessence of meekness, when Lord Darecourt observed,—

“Be seated, Flynn.”

“Thank ye, me lord; av coorse I’ll do whatever ye ordher me, even to shwim to the bottom av the deep say,” making an obeisance to both his auditors.

“Thank you, your sincerity is quite obvious, but I wish my son to know who manages the postal business on the estate.”

“Throth, an’ I’m behouldin’ to yer lordship for that sayme posishun, an’ parti-kular I am that ivery litther goes or com’s punctually.”

“So I thought,” was his employer’s pleased echo.

“Have you ever seen my handwriting?” inquired Vincent.

“Not as I know av, yer honour.”

“Then naturally you could not recognize my communications?”

“Throth, sir, how cud I?”

“Truly, but you have posted several letters from me to Mr. Vincent.”

“Oh, lots, yer lordship, an’ careful I wor in doin’ so.”

“Are you a good judge of handwriting, Mr. Flynn?” the young man demanded.

“Not much, yer honour, seein’ as how me idicashun’s limited.”

“Yet you appear able to decipher law papers and abstruse deeds.”

“Arrah ! sir ! what d’ye mayne ? ” with eagerness.

“Those documents you had in your possession when I encountered you.”

“Oh, me jewil, yer honor, I beg yer lordship’s pardon, bud I’ve got sich a suddin spasm—collick like,” and certainly he looked aghast as though undergoing physical pain.

His employer in kindly tones suggested,—

“Will you have a stimulant, Flynn ? ”

“Av yer lordship an’ Mither Vincent id be afther exkusin’ me I’d jist retire an’ take a dose av a pripirashun I always keep for these occashuns,” the looked-for “Yes, of course,” following this appeal

being the signal for the agent's retirement.

“How lucky I got away in time,” thought Brien, “bud av Eustace Dillon gits hould av Misther Vincent, knowing I’m responsible for the post, ’twill be a sarious matther to foight his long hed.”

The frank, open-hearted heir of Darecourt never divined the true cause of Flynn’s flight, but sat following the tangled, captious, attempted reasoning pursued by his irascible parent, the hour growing late and the swelling wind labouring in startling gusts, agitating the heavy tapestry and driving the sparks lightly upwards, while pursuing its rebellious route through the cavernous chimney.

The old man drew his chair nearer to the fire, saying,—

“What a wild night! It is better to be

housed than exposed to the fury of such a storm."

"But, father, Providence has blessed us with His bounty, while many, alas! are at this moment roofless and starving."

"The bounty of Providence has nothing to do with the Darecourt property, sir. As for those whom you describe, I say it is quite right that they are in want if they will not work."

"Yet they may not be able, or even granting the latter provision, may be unsuccessful in obtaining work," somewhat timidly urged the son.

"In either case let them starve; the deduction being that with money people can live, without it they must perish."

"You were not wont to hold these strong opinions."

"My eyes are opened, sir, by what I have seen and heard from my valued agent."

“ I am afraid, my lord, I could never fancy either this individual or his theories.”

“ Circumstances may compel you to do both. Listen to me. When you succeed to my position and find these Irish unwilling to pay except under extreme pressure,—Oh, dear, what a flash !” ejaculated the speaker, the electric fluid illumining the apartment, and interrupting Lord Darecourt’s speech.

Vincent soon after addressed his parent, asking,—

“ Who told you the Irish were unwilling to pay ? ”

“ Brien Flynn.”

“ He appears to have a bad opinion of almost every one.”

“ He has,” was hastily replied ; “ and I admire his conduct for that reason ; were he less assiduous in protecting my interests, no doubt he would be popular.”

“That can never be,” exclaimed the son resolutely.

“Pray, sir, why do you hazard this sterile opinion?” inquired Lord Darecourt, elevating his small eyes with marked curiosity.

“Dear father, I know it on good authority.”

“Be so kind as to say what that is?”

“Mr. Eustace Dillon.”

“Is it possible,” screamed the old man haughtily, “that you dare to quote that miscreant as an authority, or even mention his name in my presence?”

“I was not aware that he had offended any one,” was volunteered penitentially.

“He has, sir. This same Dillon is the mainspring of all the bad, vengeful feeling moving the tenantry against my agent for merely doing his duty.”

“ Does the information respecting Mr. Dillon come from Flynn ? ”

“ It does.”

“ I thought so,” Vincent dryly observed, continuing, “ May I inquire if Mr. Dillon is in any way indebted to the estate ? ”

“ Unfortunately, no ; the agent only waits this opportunity to oust him altogether.”

“ Then, father, Mr. Dillon, at all events, is not one of those who wish to evade paying their lawful debts.”

“ But Flynn adds that the tenants wholly maintain him, he being of such use in helping them to thwart me,” answered the senile nobleman with warmth.

“ This is really going too far. Mr. Dillon is not wealthy, but I will pledge my truest honour that he is a gentleman in the most conservative sense of which that term is susceptible.”

“ A gentleman,” hissed Lord Darecourt ;

“that fellow a gentleman, who Brien avers is wholly incapable of doing anything but sit in the drinking-shop and stir up drunken brawls.”

“Your informant has falsely and malignantly perverted truth.” This was exclaimed in an earnest voice of genuine feeling, which Vincent suddenly arrested, saying, “Pardon my intemperate speech, but I feel you have been deeply, wilfully deceived.”

The aged lord was now thoroughly heated, assuming a louder tone of voice than it was supposed he possessed, partly due to the subject-matter arousing his ire, and partly to the stormy elements without, making low speech very difficult to be heard.

The unusual epithet applied by his son to the trusted deputy fired him with an ungovernable passion, smothering all else

in its intensity but the desire to stigmatize Eustace Dillon, and every one and everything Irish as paltry, servile, and despicable.

“I will allow no person to traduce my agent, sir,” he ground between his gums.

“You speak of him, father, as you believe him to be,” was answered demurely.

“As I know he is.”

“May I not plead for what I know of Mr. Dillon in the same way?”

“Not to the disadvantage of Brien Flynn. I repeat this Dillon is a vile, disreputable person, whom no one of respectability would acknowledge, but that equally contemptible jade they call Neville.”

“Hold,” protested the heir of Darecourt, “in my presence not even a father shall speak of Miss Lucy Neville in terms

other than those befitting an undoubted Irish gentlewoman."

"Ha! ha!" sneered Lord Darecourt scornfully, confronting his son, who also rose.

"This so-called Lady——"

"No one dare style her otherwise," was firmly interrupted.

"You saved her life."

"I did not, father, she saved mine."

"Ha! ha! very good, very good. Flynn has stated the reverse. However, you seem to take an unusual interest in this—well, say lady for courtesy's sake."

"My lord! Miss Neville is already the talisman controlling my whole future."

"What do you mean?" restraining his seething fury.

"This day I besought her, to whom I owe my life, to honour me with her hand."

"Great heavens!" yelled the liege of

Darecourt, livid with rage, his emaciated body swaying towards the door, motioning, "Depart, renegade to my name and family. Marry her, and I will visit you both with my lasting malediction ; my curse shall enthrall thee and thine throughout existence."

As the banished Vincent Darecourt silently passed out from the home of his forefathers, that revengeful parent, actuated by some unknown influence, moved to the window, looking after him, when he beheld the figure of his deceased wife on the lawn. The lurid, dazzling lightning playfully disporting around her, while, with averted face she pointed down the long, dark avenue, where the retreating form of their offspring was at times visible. The recollection of the late dream flashed upon him in all its force, and in an agony Lord Darecourt frantically shrieked,—

“Come back, Vincent, come back, return to your father,” but an unearthly voice swept past the bereaved parent, prostrating him by that awful sentence, “Too late, too late!!!”

CHAPTER II.

“MARVELLOUS!” ejaculated Mr. Dorrington Darecourt, as the agent chuckled over his narration of the interview between the lord of Darecourt and his son.

“Id wor most nathural like, sir, to see the way I grew suddinly afflictid whin Misther Vincent comminced about laygal deeds an’ parchmints—ha, ha.”

“Very fortunate that it ended so ; but from what I hear of this Eustace Dillon, it will make a deep impression on him, should my cousin name the subject.”

“Which he is sartin’ to do, sir, an’ whin the big hed av Dillon begins thinkin’ the

litthers all wint through me hands an' av the dockemints Misther Vincent seen, who knows where 'twill sthop ? ”

“ Yes; this necessitates some practical steps being taken to prevent their meeting, although I must confess it baffles my comprehension how to effect that end.”

“ Havn't ye got enof av writtin comunicashuns from O'Grady yit ? ”

“ To convict Dillon—yes, but not sufficient to seriously compromise my cousin.”

“ Bud now's the time, Misther Dorrington, while Lord Darecoort's in his prisint timper. Git Misther Vincent into som' illaygal connixshun wid the ribel, an' the gaym's ours thin an' there.”

“ The latter is very guarded,” was responded.

“ Howsomiver he alriddy belayves ye're me lord's son ; pump him dhry till ye've got all ye want, thin hand him over to

Misther Arkwright, who'll only be too glad av the job, while Eustace Dillon an' Misther Vincent are taken care av in another way."

"Ha! O'Grady told me he would attend the Malahide Fair despite every precaution."

"Hurrah! Thin that's jist the place to grip him, an' I'll git Sir Marvyn's agint to move at wanst."

"But, Flynn, this does not avail us against the others."

"Thru for ye, Misther Dorrington, excipt thraysonible litthers from the ribel wor found an thim, thin the quarry is ours."

"I am not very hopeful, believing that we cannot move any further without aid."

"Why not sekure Miss Chalmers, sir? wid her help the ship rights at wanst."

"A very good notion upon my word,

were it not that I would rather have succeeded to the position before deciding one way or the other as to marrying."

"Ahem! why not marry her an the crass" (placing his two fingers over each other), "an' giv her up whin ye plaze."

"Flynn!" was vehemently exclaimed, "never dare to insinuate such a damnable thought again, or we separate from that moment, no matter how identical appear our interests. I may be driven by circumstances to acts of crime and debasement, but at least I know what I shall not become."

"Why, sir, me thought was ye'd behayve as other gintlemin do."

"'Tis false! They are not gentlemen, and are unworthy of that name. I shall be none of them!"

The speaker walked the floor in passionate fervour.

“ I am sorry, Misther Dorrington, to hav’——”

“ There,” he interposed testily, “ let it pass ! When you know me better, you will find I am not so heartless as may be imagined.”

The agent now looked upon his *confrère* with evident admiration, saying,—

“ Well, sir, there’s no heart bud has a wake spot, an’ I’m not likely to forgit yer’s—all honour t’ye for that sayme.”

“ I am glad you seem to understand me. It will aid us considerably when knowing how far to proceed, and where to stop.” Dorrington Darecourt continued,—

“ Your consistency in always upholding the power of Miss Chalmers to assist me is somewhat remarkable, and I shall think it over seriously.”

“ Do, sir. Through her ye can sthrike home to Eustace Dillon direct.”

He looked eagerly across the table to note the effect of those words on his companion.

“ How so ? ”

“ Be makin’ her comprehind ye enof to jine in——”

“ In what, pray ? ”

“ Why runnin’ Dillon to bay—or, I may say, prizin.”

“ Certainly it would be an odd request,” the young man observed, with a half-smile.

“ Stay, sir, may I ax whin will ye see Miss Fanny agin ? ”

“ That depends on myself, although I am bound by promise to go yachting with her round the coast for a day.”

“ A good opportunity, Mистер Dorrington, to git her to understhand ye.”

“ Understand me ! ” was echoed.

“ Yis, sir. Miss Chalmers is a fanciful, ambishus ledly. Tell her,”—he rose quickly

from the table,—“she can help ye to becom' Lord Darecoort, an' she will.”

“How so?”

“Be puttin' the ribel's packit av litters in Eustace Dillon's pockit.”

“Which will involve an explanation, Flynn.”

“'Tis bekayze Dillon is plottin' wid yer couzin to deprive ye av yer property be false deeds, an' av coorse she thinks ye are Mither Vincent, an' not yerself at all at all.”

“Suppose I go thus far, and that she consents, how can she accomplish it?”

“Aizey,” answered the agent, his pallid face beaming with delight. “Her sister keeps company wid a young brother av Eustace Dillon, who'll do jist as he's tould, for the rayson Eustace is down an him bekayze he coorts her.”

“Upon my word, Flynn, you are most

facile in the various ways for arriving at any required end, and I really applaud your plan on the present occasion; indeed, the only difficulty lies with myself, whether I can go so far as to ask Miss Chalmers to do as suggested."

"Look ye, Misther Dorrington," said the deputy warningly, "there's no time to looze. Lasth noight I kep me ears open an the outside av the door, listhnin' to me Lord an' Misther Vincent; well whin the sphlit kem, an yer couzin wint away, the ould man cried like a banshee av a winther's mornin'—ay, even call'd his son back, bud forthunately his words wor not hard in the wind. Howsomiver, I hard thim, an' id sphakes no good for us ayther."

"Yet, their separation is irrevocable, is it not?"

"I don't know, sir, blood is thicker nor wather. I think, me Lord'll repint,

an' tis a close eye I'll keep out for littthers, seein' how that's the grate card; so long as Misther Vincent doesn't hear from his father we're an the winnin' side, an' the ould Lord 'll git so annoyed bein' niglictid he'll carry out his thrirts."

"Vincent cannot possibly be disinherited, and assuredly he knows this."

"Bud, Misther Dorrington, don't ye see we'll disinherit him, even av his father can't, only 'twill bring public opinyan an our side, knowin' Lord Darecoort did all he cud agin Misther Vincent."

"That's reasonable to a degree."

"I'm glad ye see id in that light, sir. Now be guided be me, git Miss Fanny to undertake the work. Whin she's riddy, hav suffishint av writin' from O'Grady to thransport thim all; thin, an' not till thin, ye can kalkilate an success."

"It shall be even as you say, Flynn. I

will take the opportunity of our yachting cruise to enlist Miss Chalmers in the service, for I now see her value."

"Thank ye, sir, an' more."

"What more, pray?"

"Ye'll never carry the day widout Miss Chalmers." There was a ring of triumph accompanying this elated expression. "Ay, sir," he added, "an' av I'm not desayv'd ye'll foind her av more valew whin ye are me Lord Darecoort."

"There is some fatality about this girl," the young man thought; "she presses me to marry her, while he points to her power, even in the consolidation of my future. This is a synchronism of ideas worth remembering, and at times I feel as if I would cherish, if not love her, were she my wife. I will think it over," he now added aloud, "and follow your suggestions so far as can be. In any case I shall abridge my

visits to the recluse of the Waste, and secure his views concerning my cousin and Dillon in writing, wherewith we will be fully armed to clear our paths whenever it becomes necessary to do so."

"Id is nicesary now, Misther Dorrington, looze this chance and we'll niver git another."

"Then be it so : " for the first time throughout their clandestine acquaintance Mr. Dorrington Darecourt presented his hand to Brien Flynn, when, with mutual gleams of real earnest accord, they returned each other's friendly pressure, the younger one silently passing from out the agent's apartment.

The latter had had no time to indulge in pleasurable communing, his late visitor having hardly withdrawn ere another presented himself with the greeting,—

"How d'ye do, Brien ? "

“Ah, is that yersel’, Roddy?” was the welcoming response.

“Throth id is, an’ how are ye?”

“Only among the middlin’s.”

“Musha! an’ isn’t id bitther than thrudgin’ to markit, wid a wuddin sthump, anyhow,” observed the visitor smiling, to which the deputy answered,—

“The baker afore the docthor is good advice.”

“Com, com, ye mus’n’t forgit when I don’ yer docthorin’ bysiness, callin’ an Misther Dillon ivery day to blind him an’ his frind about Miss Neville.”

“Ah, shure I forgot, I overlooked that, ha, ha, ha! it wor well managed indade,” and Brien Flynn laughed with genuine feeling at the pleasurable reminiscence.

After some uninteresting personal subjects had been debated between them,

Roddy said suddenly, "I didn't see ye since me mirakulous askaype from thransportashun."

"What are ye afther sayin'?"

"Thransportashun, an' divil a lie in id."

"Iths what ye deserve, an' what ye'll com' to, av ye don't put an ould head an yer young showlders."

"Bajabers," was retorted, "'tis all the other way."

The uncle scarcely relished the pointed allusion, saying, "Let's hear about yer throuble, what wor it?"

"Body-snatchin', that's all."

"Roddy, who put this illigant thrade afore ye?"

"Well, d'ye see, Docthor McGuinness called me, and sez he, 'Roddy, are ye up to a thrifle av divarshun?'

"'Arrah, docthor, jewel,' sez I, 'foind

out somethin' I'm not up to, an' ye'll obleege me'—makin' me manners at the same time, and why not?"

"Yer not up to much good anyhow," interrupted the agent with a leer.

" 'Tis the picture 'av yersel' to a turn ye're afther dhrawin'," urged Roddy, "howsomiver the docthor continew'd, 'I don't want ye to graze me wid yer soft words,' sez he, 'bud cum to the p'int.'"

" 'Manners, t'yer bitthers, is an ould axim among daycint people,' sez I, 'you go firsth.'"

" 'Then,' sez he, 'I'm sthartin' for a subjict to-noight.'"

" 'A what, docthor?' sez I.

" 'A subjict,' sez he.

" 'An' shure,' sez I, innoshintly, 'appo-blackstick fits is not the nayme av yer subjict?'

" 'Oh, dear, no,' he wint an shmilin'

kindly enof, 'I mayne I'm goin' to thry for a body in the churchyard.'

" 'A dead wan?' sez I.

" 'Yis, an' what other?' sez he.

" 'Take care 'tis not a live wan ye'll catch.'

" 'What d'ye mayne?' he axed.

" 'Only this, docthor, I'm tould there's a rig'lar watch an the look-out ivery noight.'

" 'Let's return the complimint,' sez he, 'we'll watch firsth: somethin' must be don', Roddy, for d'ye know, I kep' me class av stewdints cuttin' away an the outside av a bewtyful body av an ould warrior, till they wint too far down an' found out.'

" 'What, docthor?' I skraymed.

" 'Id wor only a dummy, bilt av plaster av Paris or painted putty.'

" 'I putty ye, docthor,' sez I, 'from the bottom av me heart; bud what's to be don?'

“ ‘Don,’ sez he, warmly, ‘the reputashun av the livin’ must be presarved at the expinse av the dead. Here’s a crown, Roddy,’ he wint an, tossin’ me the coin, ‘dhrive th’ould mare over to-noight, an’ wid the blessin’ av Hivin we’ll make a good haul, subjict an’ whisky inclewded.’

“ ‘Docthor,’ sez I, grippin’ the shiner, ‘’tis onnathural to lit ye go alone facin’ the livin’ and the dead, so I’ll be to the fore in time, although, mind ye, I don’t know as how I’d go afther all, only for the cuttin’ up ye’d git, av the putty-faced warrior kem to life wid the publick?’

“ ‘Yer a man av wondherful feelin’,’ sez he, takin’ hould av me hand, and biggist umbrella in the world cudn’t sthand the shower he dhrew from my poor wathering eyes.”

“ Arrah, com to the ‘saykill,’ ” observed the uncle petulantly.

“ I ve hard av a goose quill, Brien ; is that what ye mayne ? ”

“ Musha ! what timid brains—did ye git the subiect or not ? ” irately.

“ The docthor did, an’——”

“ An’ what ? ”

“ I dhriv the pair home.”

“ While ye walked yersel’ ? ”

“ Ha ! ha ! that’s good, walk an’ dhrive at the same time, Brien,” he laughingly resumed. “ Divil a foot, there I sat, the docthor an wan side, I an ’tother, wid the dead man bethune us, dhressed respictabel an’ life-like as the docthor’s black clothes an’ hat cud make him.”

“ Why go to that expinse and throuble ? ” inquired the agent, looking interested for the first time.

“ Id cudn’t be helped ; ye see there wor only two av us for the job, be the time we got riddy to thravil backwards id

wor brakin' day, so lucky the docthor's clothes kem in handy."

"Wor ye afeered, Roddy?"

"An the conthrary, the more whisky I got, the more I admired the sperrit; away we wint stiddy an' comfortabel through the city, no wan mindin' us an' we carin' as much for thim."

"Thin ye got home all right, av coorse?"

"Av coorse we didn't."

The uncle rose with excitement.

"Arrah, what happened?"

"Sit down, man, an' don't sthand for-ninst me an' the wind. That 'ill do," as the listener relapsed into his seat. "The mornin' wor very cowld, an' thinkin' as how 'twould warm him up somehow I sthuck a dhudeen bethune the lips av me thoughtful lookin' naybor, who darn't sphake a word an his own account, though

mind ye, for ivery dhrop the docthor an' mesel' tuck, I held up the bottle to this silent gintleman, an' why not? bud as he didn't seem in good humour I bowed, wishin' him the complimints av the sayzon an' hopin' he wor comfortabel, as I let down his share to me own sthock-in-thrade, an' wouldn't id be onnatheral av I didn't, Brien? "

" Well, what happined, Roddy? go an, man, an' finish," said the agent, in annoyed, dissatisfied tones.

" Only this. Jist as I hung the pipe out av his lips the ould mare shied, bad scan to her, an' pitched us three in the road."

" Oh, dear!" exclaimed Flynn, again starting from his seat.

" Ay, it's truth for ye, Brien," Roddy continued. " Afore we had time to turn round, the watchmin carried the silent gintleman into the stashun, for warn't id

right opposit' their own door where we wor upset.'"

"Great powers!" was further ejaculated by the uncle, "did ye run away?"

"Pshaw!" contemptuously, "what good 'id that do? no, the watchmin ran out, sayin, 'The poor gintleman seems as av he wor dead, indayde!'"

"I thought what all the min sed wor sthricht truth; bud av coorse the docthor knew bitther, 'Nonsince,' sez he, 'he's only sthunned. Git hot wather at wanst, an' carry him up quickly to me room;' for d'ye see he wor sargin to the gover'mint, an' had his private apartmints in the stashun."

"Are ye to be hanged for id!" inquired Brien.

"Divil a bit," answered Roddy. "All the day long there wor nothin' doin' bud bilin hot rags to make bread powltices, an'

I offen thought, it wor a sin to see the waste. Me post wor the door, an' whin word kem to know how the docthor's frind felt, I always sphoke to ordhers, an' sed he wor a thrifle bitther."

"But did he recover?" was Flynn's earnest inquiry.

"I don't know, Brien, we sthuck to the bread an' wather, dhrunk whisky, an' shmoked while the silent gentileman kep his distance, as we did till id got dark. 'Now is our chance,' sez the docthor, 'an' I'll give ye a goolden guinea av we succeed.'"

"Tell me, what did ye do?" inquired the uncle, looking painfully anxious now.

"The minded chaize wor brought round to the back door, and wid the help av two watchers, the Docthor an' mesel', we carried the sargin's frind downsthairs tinderly.

" 'Oh, wurra, wurra ! bud doesn't he

look pale an' like a corps,' sed the watch-min, as their eyes filled. 'Thru for ye,' I thought to mesel'; bud the docthor, in a stheamin' parspirashun as he held an to the hed part, sez, 'Aizey, me frinds; thank ye, but don't sphake loud or ye'll wake him. Keep the light from his eyes,' he whispered, as wan av thim brought his lamp too close. The gintleman didn't wake up, though the sargin shwore awful till the lamps war all gon; 'Now thin,' sez he, while hoistin' up his silent frind, ''tis a savage attack, bud in me own house he'll soon com' to.'

The agent's voice rang with emotion as he asked,—

"Did he com' to?"

"Yis," answered Roddy, "to quarthers, the next day the putty warrior wor gon, the silent gintleman in his plaice, an Docthor M'Guinness dhrinkin' his helth."

CHAPTER III

A FEW nights after O'Grady was sentenced to be executed, the "Darecourt Arms" presented one of its ordinary features—the usual replenishing of glasses and charging of pipes followed as the accustomed corollary upon the landlord taking his seat, wherefrom his liquid eye and facile tongue sought out every one individually, saying a pleasant word to all.

It was not long before the Darecourt business became the general subject of notice and remark, angry, hot words assuming the place of the previous hilarity.

"There's no denyin' we're much worse

aff nor we wor dhurin' the short time the young lord kem among us, God bless him."

"Ay, thrue for ye, bud Misther Eustace sez as how there isn't a chance av his returnin', at all at all."

"That's bad news in throth, yet who'd know excipt Misther Dillon, more power to his big heart."

"That blackguard Flynn's goin' from bad to worse, still the longisth lane has an ind, and he'll foind id out sooner nor he expicts."

From the foregoing it will be gathered that the theme was the reverse of enlivening, and noting its depressing effect on trade, the landlord sought to arrest its continuance, saying in a half-meditative tone,—

"I often wondher how that daycint boy, the young lord had wid him—I mayne the sowldier—gits an."

"Ah, shure wid sich a wan as Misther

Vincent wheriver they are they'll thrive. —Here's their good health anyhow," was warmly responded.

"The lasth time we met," continued the former, "he tould me a rayl piece av a (what d'ye call id, a—a"—hesitating—"a narymative), shure that's the word at any rate."

"Mine host " was making money faster than he ever expected, and one of his weaknesses was to "listhen to his bitthers," and in whatever way he could afterwards recollect employsome of the expressions thus heard, which it is needless to affirm he did not understand ; his audience being of the same mental calibre, avoided any reference to authenticity or correctness, while the landlord winked to himself at the visible surprise his "jawbreakers " created.

"Oh, do tell us the nar—nar—whativer ye call id," was entreated.

“Ye mayne the narymative,” he replied rebukingly, continuing in a lower tone, “Av coorse we’re not all blessed wid the same mine of intilligence, bud I’ll make bould to state, I’ll howld me own wid any two min this side av the wather.”

“Com, this side of the whisky, an’ I’ll be afther belayvin’ ye,” interrupted one of the Darecourt habitués, whereupon the landlord quickly retorted,—

“Thomas Muldhoon, a loose tongue’s like a disayzed bellice throubled in the wind. Don’t,—I mayne id kindly,—bud don’t be afther airin’ yer concayts, or I’ll com up to the livel av a new article, an’ blow ye to blazes!”

Tom slunk into a corner, obviously “burst” in public estimation, when with the prefatory remark, “I must tell id me own way,” the “narymative” commenced.

“ Behould ye all there wor a poor officer—bud a rayl throe blood belongin’ to the ridgmint, not bein’ able to jine in the divarshun, an’ the divil knows what wid the resth, who warn’t half so good, though they had the longest purses ; wan way or other they med the rayl gentelman feel at times as av he’d chaw thim into bird-seed, or blow his brains out—not an ayzey matther mind ye, whin ye hav a fair share to boot, ay, an’ a thrifle to lind.”

The speaker bent his head, and placing his finger laterally upon it drew it around its whole base. When one of the auditors, colloquially known as “ Cup-o’-Tay,” ventured on remarking,—

“ Ah, dear me, isn’t his maykeness a wondher to behould ? most people thry to foind brains in the forhed, bud the land-lord’s contint wid the thick av his neck.”

“ So far as brains go, ’tis neck an’

nothin' wid ye, anyhow," shouted irrepressible Tom from the corner.

Elevating his eyes, which had observed a downward posture throughout this unseemly interruption, "mine host" said,—

"'Tis very hard to wound the light heart or give a knock-down blow to the sperrits, for shure I wor wanst giddy as the barn-door cock, foindin' the usual hole in the kitchen sthopped—the divil resayv' the foot he'd go to roost till the front door wor held open while he waltzed through the hall. Now I've larned sense, an' I advise ye all, make yer brains pull ye up in the world, don't thry to pull thim down."

A chorus of assent greeted this effusion, which manifestly pleased the narrator, who continued,—

"As I towld ye, the young officer felt poor whin all behind an' afore him look'd

rich divil-me-cares, bud the hardest nut to crack wor the kurnal, an' the thrue blood sariously considered whether he'd horse-whip haf a dozen av thim all together, wid the sartinty av bein' casheer'd, an' a full pinshin, or coax thim out an a bit av pleashure, an' giv thim the chance av brakin' his neck or mindin' the hole in their own manners."

At this point Tom opened his wide mouth, with the intention of again interrupting the "narymative," whereupon the interested Widow Flanagan suddenly thrust the large weight of the eight-day clock far and fast into this facial cavern, holding on to the heavy chain, while motioning him—semi-asphyxiated as he was—to be silent until the story had finished, and certainly she succeeded; neither Tom nor the clock being heard again while the recital lasted.

The landlord, unmindful of either untimely event, proceeded,—

“Jist whin the poor gintleman, God help him !” (“God help me !” mentally prayed Tom) “felt detarmined to bring his misery to an ind,” (the consideration below the clock appendage was “Whin will mine ind ?”) “it happened wan noight afther dinner” (somebody internally sighed, “Av a weight is a delicacy, you’r welkem to me dinner ;”) “the kurnal, who got intoxicated, wantid to play cards—not our rayl divarshun, behould ye, av the sphile five,” (“Mine id sphile a dozen,” thought Tom wearily) “whin av nicessary, ye can hav a fair sthand-up foight, shake hands, an’ play agin till the time coms round, whin whoiver got bate thrys to return the complimint, bud the kurnal’s wor wan av thim things as puts ye to shleep,” (Tom wearily mused, “There’s a thriflin’ impedimint to

me shleep ") " after ye've had too much av the craythor, as in his case." (The weight alone, without the case, was too much for some person.) " Begorra ! I almost forgit the nayme, bekayze the gaym's bad ; " hesitates, " 'Tis rouze-ye-wor."

" What a murdherin' nayme ! " remarked the " Widdy Flanagan," somewhat unguardedly, loosening the weight in Tom's orifice, who thereupon stifflingly muttered,—

" I wish id wor rouze ye are "—but the next moment the weight and chain had again found refuge in his abnormal recess, all indeed save the last link of the latter, and as if to annihilate the possibility of further manifestations of feeling, the indefatigable widow supplemented the aforesaid implements by driving half her elbow down after them, though well for her it was that Tom could not bring his teeth together by reason of the

first gag, or assuredly she would not have regarded him with such stolid indifference while the "narymative purchased."

"The poor officer cudn't pay av he losht the gayme, so very diskreetly he sat starin' at nothin' an' pickin' his teeth." (Tom, from his lowly station, was convinced it would afford him great pleasure to pick somebody above him.) "The old hot-headed kurnal wint ashleep, while the other illigants kep' an at the rouze-yewor," (the captive mused, "Alas! rouze id isn't!") "till he woke up suddinly shoutin', 'Who sthole me diamond snuff-box?' Ivery eye turned an the rayl gintleman, who spoke not a word," (Tom thought he knew another who could say as much) "an they at wanst put him down for havin' the diamonds."

"Shure, plaze God, he didn't do sich

a dirty thrick," eagerly interposed the relict Flanagan.

"I'm comin' to id," answered the landlord, proceeding ; "but sartinly the chain av sarkumstances seemed sthrong agin him, an' had to be broken" (Tom was positive the chain of the clock was stronger, and ought to be broken first ;) "so they detarmined an shuttin' the door an sarchin' ivery sowl in the room. Whin they turned thimsilves inside out, they kem to the silent officer, bud the bowld boy sez, 'I'm a gintleman, there's me swoord,' houldin' the polished pot-sthick afore their noses."

"I hope id shmelt too sharp for thim," gleefully suggested Tom's captor.

"A little id do me good," was the captive's decided opinion.

" 'Now,' sez he," continued the landlord, " 'the first man puts a hand an me 'ill hav to crass wipons,' throwin the steel

poker an the table, waitin' to see who'd take id up," ("I'd take id in prifirence to a clock-weight," Tom pondered despondingly,) "but not a sowl attimptid to touch id," fiercely shouted the narrator.

"Alas! so I feel," was Tom's bitter lamentation.

"What did the blackguards do?" inquired the exasperated Flanagan, in excitement.

"Put up wid id," answered the landlord sternly.

"Shure mine is put down," said poor Tom unheard.

"How will id ind?" broke forth from the trembling, anxious widow.

"Ay, ay! how will id ind?" formed one absorbing time consideration.

"I obsarve yer impatience," resumed mine host, "so I'll conclewd."

The thought below the buried weight

was, "I'm impashunt, bud I'm gum-clew'd."

"Whin things go farthest," (Tom was positive his jaws had never been so long and far apart before,) "they ginerally take a turn t'other way."

Poor Tom's effort to turn the other way was a signal failure.

"The kurnal," exclaimed the landlord, rising in his chair, "becomin' narvous at the idaya av a foight, flusther'd in ivery diricshun, suddinly discovered the cursid diamonds in a pocket av the new coat he had an, whin, ye may depind, a grate load wor lifted aff the poor officer's mind."

"I'll shware an me Bible oath the lasth part av the narymative is thrue anyhow," stiflingly groaned Tom, as the Widow Flanagan tugged her elbow, the weight and chain out of his enlarged throat.

"Abandon your frivolity and follow me,"

admonished Eustace Dillon, whose ashy face was suddenly seen at the door, wherefrom he continued in stern tones, "The hour of woe has struck, see!" (pointing outwards) "the night-star of the ruins is on fire!"

Semi-suppressed shrieks and murmurs attended this announcement, its import being vividly reflected from the timid, abashed looks of those now moving on tip-toe after him.

Far-off, on the summit of Wentworth Waste, a tiny light faintly flickered 'mid the overwhelming darkness. Thrice it was elevated and lowered; finally—at the hollow, almost imperceptible sound of a horn—being extinguished.

"Oh, Misther Eustace," pathetically pleaded Cup-o'-Tay, "who is dead?"

"Some heavy misfortune has befallen us, but what it is I know not," was replied

in accents of woe ; and silently they press onward.

Reaching the outskirts of the Waste, they found many already assembled gazing in mute anxiety towards its cone, the summons of that light and horn usually denoting death to one of them.

“Forward !” vociferated Eustace Dillon, crossing the boundary outside of which they apprehensively stand, whereupon a general ascent was commenced.

Toiling upwards 'mid the dark entanglements arresting each step, the foremost of these plodders reached the ruins, but hesitates and falters ; no human form being discernible on the plateau as expected.

“This is strange,” muttered the leader ; “I will call aloud ;” whereupon he demanded, “Who fired the night-star of the Waste ?”

“ A friend to O’Grady,” was instantly replied in a clear, soft, feminine voice.

“ Oh, alas ! is he dead ? ”

“ No, he yet lingers,” still answered from within the ruins.

“ What would you with us ? ” continued the interrogator.

“ If the questioner wishes to be foremost amongst those loyal to the patriot, let him come to me unattended, and he shall know.”

These words were hardly spoken ere Eustace Dillon had gone whence the voice emanated.

A few seemingly interminable moments passed to those awaiting his return, gazing perplexed and bewildered towards the place where they had last seen him.

At length he reappeared, but not alone ; at his side there walked a muffled female form, whose features were care-

fully concealed, attended by a fierce, agile wolf-dog.

Passing through the ranks of their silent watchful observers, these two reached the confines of the churchyard, when the stranger turned slowly, saying,—

“Here we separate; remember my motive is centred in that one word—gratitude; and the night-token of your people was my only resource. Be firm, and we will succeed. Farewell.”

“Heaven grant it!” echoed the young man, and the next moment he was alone.

“Once more,” he cried, hastily returning to the old abbey, “let the flash of our death-signal brighten this desolate, abhorred Waste; now at least it is the symbol of life, joy, and liberty.”

“What does id all mayne, sir? who is the lady?” inquiringly reached him as he clambered up the ruins.

“It signifies the knell of despotism, and the freedom of O’Grady,” exclaimed Eustace Dillon, standing on the highest point of the decayed edifice, “which, with God’s help, that woman will accomplish.”

“Amen, Amen!” ardently rose up from those shadowy forms, and floated far upon the still, torpid wind as the night-star of the Waste was thrice waved over their lowly heads.

CHAPTER IV.

WITHIN his gloomy prison vault O'Grady passed the few days remaining before his execution in a quiet, resigned state of calm, silent dejection, but not of despair. None of his friends dared to call upon one whose tainted name would hereafter be employed to their own destruction ; and with the knowledge that his mother was dead, and that his father had sold the paternal property and gone abroad, all thought of the external world would seem to have been abandoned, as alone he endured life, little caring how soon it should cease, expiated on the gallows.

Sometimes, though, he grew animated with the thought and even hope of escape, but these fitful gleams of uncertain joy fled when surveying the strength of those massive walls closely encompassing him, and doubly dispirited he relapsed again into melancholy. Preserving the same reticent exterior, the officials who attended him failed to guess even approximately at what was passing within the mind of that proud man, the sad, painful mission of the superior officer to apprise him that on the morrow at daybreak he should be hanged failing to elicit any symptom of feeling, except the commonplace "Thank you, sir." Indeed, of the two the one most embarrassed was the representative of the law retreating from before that calm, self-reliant glance.

As day began to draw to its close, O'Grady threw himself on the mattress,

and, actuated by the knowledge of its being his last night, his mind slowly traversed the past, and grew tranquil in its train of wakened recollections by the repose that sorrow casts around every joy.

Denser grew the mantle of night upon the silent face of nature, and heavier became the deep-drawn sleep into which the prisoner's harmonious thoughts had lulled him. How long this spell of happy oblivion continued he knew not, but at length he leaped up, startled by the outside heavy bolt on the door of the cell being roughly shot back into its socket, whereupon, without saying one word, the jailer ushered in a stout, middle-sized gentleman, wearing spectacles, and retired, leaving the prisoner wondering, through his half-sleeping eyes, at what was passing before him. During the pause which ensued,

O'Grady placed his only chair at the disposal of the stranger with a polite bow, saying at the same time,—

“May I inquire whom I have the pleasure of addressing, and under what circumstances this visit is conferred upon me?”

The visitor took possession of the lonely seat, and casting his eye upon the mean, wretched habitation, exclaimed involuntarily, “What a dreadful place!”—Afterwards, resting his face in his hands, he reclined thoughtfully against the back of the chair, while both were silent.

The continued suspense became painful to the condemned man, who observed,—

“You must have forgotten my inquiry as to the object of your coming.”

A light, thin voice proceeded from the stout person, who, unmindful of the question, soliloquized,—

“It is his last night!”

“It is !” was echoed by the conjecturing prisoner.

“And this is an awful place !”

“It *is* an awful place !” followed with a bitter smile.

“To-morrow he is to be hanged,” continued the fat individual.

“To-morrow I am to be hanged,” the listener responded.

“It shall not be ! You will not be hanged !” exclaimed the rotund personage, leaping to his feet.

As these words burst upon the condemned rebel, he rose, moving towards his unknown visitor, and inquired,—

“Who are you, sir ?”

“That I cannot yet tell you,” was the quiet reply.

“Impossible ! Could you refuse me the name of my would-be deliverer ?”

“I will be your deliverer ; but my

name must be withheld until you are free, then all shall be revealed."

"It is strange!" observed the prisoner, his eye, in mute surprise, fixed on that fat man.

"It *is* strange, sir; and it will be stranger yet when you learn who I am—but let us proceed——"

"Are you aware of the extent of the prison, and of its being closely guarded on all sides?" O'Grady anxiously inquired.

"Dismiss your doubts, sir. I know all that is necessary for your purpose."

"What of your own, pray? Do you run no risk in seeking to liberate me?"

"That I have reduced to its lowest possible sum. All depends on your own resolution; tell me forthwith, are you prepared to make the attempt this moment?"

"Ay, prepared for anything!" and he put forth his mighty arms with a sudden-

ness of alacrity and power, hitherto unthought-of by the questioner, making the latter recoil backwards, and reveal his white teeth, with a look of partial alarm.

The prisoner's face lit up with a hopeful glow as he passionately proceeded,—

“Whoever you are, place me in the path of freedom ; and though fifty barred the way, armed to the teeth, I will rush headlong to my fate.”

“Such men as you, Mr. O’Grady, are born to lead, and woe will overtake those who have dared to abase themselves ; but I would fain ask when free—as you shall be—will your revenge be visited upon those betrayers ? ”

“It is hard,” was answered in a plaintive voice, “to forego every vestige of just retribution and bury our manhood when the false one at last appears, for whom we have hungered in the hour of misfortune,”

and the speaker sank upon the mattress, while the pleader came closer, agitated in look and voice, saying,—

“The lion is noble-hearted, and contemns littleness——”

“The lion resents treachery,” O’Grady sharply answered.

“Never at the sacrifice of magnanimity,” was rapidly and firmly rejoined.

The condemned man was now greatly moved, and casting himself on his knees looked upwards fervently, his eyes becoming moist with tenderness, while slowly uttering,—

“If thou, great Heaven, deign to be merciful in my plenitude of sorrow, will I not best attest my gratitude therefor by emulating this clemency, however feebly?”

“Then I am content and expect no more, only in the days to come forget not what you but now said.”

The prisoner bent his head affirmatively, while the stranger drew forth some articles of peculiar attire, thereby considerably lessening his bulky dimensions, handing them to the convict.

“ This suit,” he continued, “ will effectually conceal you. Remember the guard is largely augmented, and the first gun fired will be the signal of detection, if you are not already outside the prison before the shot is heard.” Looking at his watch, the speaker proceeded,—

“ In five minutes more the jailer must return ; throw on this disguise, and be ready. I will engage him in conversation until you come behind, gag and secure him ; then I shall retire as I came, to have a rope-ladder cast over the outer wall. After my departure, go noiselessly to the door of the guard-room, and jump suddenly into the midst of the soldiers, who will be frightened,

and escape along the way whereby you entered, their only outlet ; secure the bolt, so that they cannot regain their guns, while you hasten into the exercise-yard, and up the ladder. When descending therefrom on the outer side of the prison-wall, a gentleman will be in waiting to conduct you in a boat to the bridge, where a trusted horse stands ready to bear you away."

The felon listened eagerly throughout these succinct directions, at the termination thereof eagerly exclaiming, "In Heaven's name do not deny me the right to learn who my deliverer is ? "

"When in the saddle, my confidant who will have guided you thither will give you a letter explaining all ; and now, sir, farewell ! It is improbable we can ever meet again in this world."

"Oh, this is amazing, why seek to debar me from knowing your name ? "

“ Quick,” the stranger said, “ I hear the jailer’s returning steps, good-bye,”—his voice grew thick—“ remember my last words, Mr. O’Grady : be merciful, even as you have promised to Heaven and me.”

Hurriedly completing his anomalous attire the rebel concealed himself as the officer entered, then immediately overpowered and gagged him, stifling every attempted word or sound of resistance.

“ Farewell,” was now softly spoken by the rebel and his unknown benefactor in eloquence of look and gesture impossible to portray. Thus ended that mysterious meeting.

As the sound of the stranger’s departing footfalls ceased, O’Grady carefully approached the half-open door at the end of the passage, wherefrom loud laughter and mirth proceeded, and in another second a huge bear—this being the form of dis-

guise assumed by the prisoner—rolled in among the soldiers, hugging them in its mighty embrace, posing in attitudes of violence, and bearing everything and every one unresistingly before it. The frightened, maddened soldiers would have faced death in any other conceivable form, but the unexpected Bruin proved all-powerful. His captives fighting amongst themselves, and shrieking aloud, escaped through the jammed doorway, and woe betide the last contingent as the ambling bear increased his hugging caresses.

When all had fled into the outer passage, the rebel swiftly shot the bolt of the iron door, and throwing off his disguise, made for the appointed place, where, finding the promised rope, he nimbly crossed the high wall, and safely descended on the other side. Everything progressed auspiciously, the gentleman he was advised of being in

waiting to conduct him to the small boat, which was rapidly impelled towards the bridge. Here securing it, they jumped to the bank, where, standing in the shade of the wide granite arch, were two fleet horses, ready saddled and bridled.

“ Quick, take this one, and come with me,” said the strange pioneer, leading the second quadruped up the bank, the fugitive following, at the summit whereof they mounted their respective steeds.

“ Seek the Wicklow hills, Mr. O’Grady, here is a letter from your deliverer, pistols, ammunition, and, and ”—hesitating—“ your rescuer entreats you to accept this gold.”

“ Sully not a glorious deed by those hateful words,” exclaimed the freed patriot, as he put forth his hand and fraternally grasped that of his companion, adding,—

“ I solemnly conjure you to tell me the name of my life’s benefactor, that my gratitude may be no longer withheld.”

“ You will find it in the letter I gave you.”

“ Oh, spare me this torturing suspense, I beseech you,” O’Grady warmly pleaded.

“ The name is——” began the equestrian, but the alarm-guns from the prison burst forth on the instant, and the affrighted horses furiously dashed forward in opposite directions.

CHAPTER V.

ONE fine bright sunny morning, many of the good citizens of the fair city of Paris, when killing time upon the Boulevard des Italiens, were surprised to see a tall, erect, silver-haired man, decently clad, standing hat in hand, with a clean pasteboard card stuck on his pale, furrowed forehead. Unmoved and unabashed, the stranger tenaciously held his ground for several hours—his earnest mien and resigned look annihilating the ready *jeu d'esprit* in which the French excel.

“ Que dit-il ? ”

“ Qui cherchez-vous ? ”

“ Que voulez-vous dire ? ”

“ Parlez-vous Français, Allemand, Espagnol, ou Italien ? ”

“ Que demandez-vous ? ”

“ Que puis-je faire pour votre service, monsieur ? ”

The foregoing remarks were ventured upon by one coterie of the puzzled Parisians, but leading to no practical results, these made room for others equally astonished, at the unwonted problem.

Impenetrably stolid, the grave old man neither winced nor moved, while his observers drew near, looked at the white card, then at him, and, baffled in the attempt to understand either, finally went away.

When any one addressed him, the uncovered stranger attentively listened for some word intelligible to his ears, failing which he again relapsed into his former attitude.

The prevailing feeling of amazement was fast developing into one of apprehension among the concerned lookers on—when a party of workmen, in the conventional blue blouse and jaunty calotte, drew near, attracted by the rare spectacle. They, like their many predecessors, went closer to the pasteboard, and retiring interested in what they could not understand, one of them said aloud to his companions in a pronounced English accent,—

“ I can’t make it out, there’s the name of a baronet on that visiting card.”

He had hardly uttered these words ere the panic-stricken crowd were violently thrust aside by the old man plunging towards the speaker, who, dismayed, found himself held tightly in a vice-like grip, while with tears coursing down his cheeks, the stranger shouted exuberantly, “ Oh, may the blessin’ av God be an ye ; shure

haven't ye saved me life, I cudn't hav sthood id much longer, among a lot av divils who don't know wan daycint word at all at all, oh dear ! oh dear ! ”

The throng looked on in troubled wonderment, while the Englishman, soon recovering his composure, inquired,—

“ What is the meaning of that card on your forehead ? ”

“ 'Tis a public notice, me frind.”

“ The people don't understand it.”

“ No,” was replied with energy, “ be-kayze they're not suffishintly idikated.”

The questioner laughed as he proceeded,—“ The name reads Sir Mervyn Mervyn, Bart., Paris ; but who is this Sir Mervyn Mervyn ? ”

“ A rayl gintleman, wan av the good sort ; an' plaze God whin I clap me eyes an him, he'll be afther doin' me justice ; 'tis all I want.”

“ I see then your object is to find out this baronet,” observed his questor with a relieved look.

“ Shure the card tould as much, only they can’t sphake daycint like, much less rade. Oh,” added the earnest old man, “ av they had Billy O’Toole, our larn’d schoolmaster, for haf a year, wuldn’t he inshtrect the whole Frinch nayshun ; an’,” as he bitterly regarded the staring crowd, “ divil a much good ye’ll do till I git back an’ sind him over to save yer sowls an’ bodies.”

Seeing that their innocent French observers began gesticulating somewhat wildly, the Englishman good-naturedly separated from his fellow-mechanics, leading the old stranger away, while he inquired,—

“ How long have you been there ? ”

“ Where, me frind ? ”

“ Where I met you.”

“ Too long to count ; bud anyhow I’ll

hav a recknin' for Sir Marvyn about his blackguard agint, who dhrew me here."

"Ah," observed his conductor, continuing their conversation, "I suppose your business has something to do with land in Ireland of which this baronet is owner?"

"Divil a thruer word iver ye spoke."

The amazed Saxon laughed outright, adding,—

"I am bringing you where we will easily ascertain if the baronet is now in Paris."

"Wheriver he is I'll foind him," was energetically replied, "av it wor in Timbucktoo."

"You expect him to settle this same business in your interest, I suppose?"

"Av I didn't d'ye think I'd put an me Sunday clothes wid a few 'tinpinny' pieces in me breeches pocket, an' foot id ivery yard av the way from Dublin to where we now sthand?"

“Is this possible?”

“’Tis as sartin’, as I hope for success from Sir Marvyn Marvyn, I walked ivery inch av the way, excipt whin the boat wudn’t let me.”

“Why, you don’t speak French.”

“What man of sense wud? Yet I know enof av their larnin’ now to do a lifetime; an’ whin I go back, plaze God, me litthers to Sam Rowly’s newspaper, called the *Dhirty Boy*, ’ill be the makins av iths forthin an’ mine.”

Suppressing his amusement, the interested auditor resumed inquiringly,—

“Your journey through England was feasible enough, but what I cannot understand is your march from the coast to Paris, a distance of over two hundred miles.”

“The same power above that timpers the blake winds to the shorn lamb ’ill

support ivery man, av his cause is hanest; foindin' I cudn't git a taste av justice from Misther Arkwright the agint, I shwore I'd thry for id from his masther, an' mind ye, me frind, I'll succeed."

That elevated tone of voice bespoke an imperious resolve, but if there could exist a lingering doubt within the breast of his listener it was suddenly swept away by that echoing, square, broad, nailed brogue, which with ruthless determination the old man raised and whacked upon the ground. One strong, fervid shake of that wide bony hand was the Saxon's offering on the shrine of natural rectitude, and the Englishman sincerely hoped he would conquer.

The hearty white-crested Hibernian was conducted by his guide to the Bureau des Etrangers, where it became speedily discovered that Sir Mervyn Mervyn was a

very wealthy unmarried English baronet, living in opulence and splendour at the Rue St. Thomas du Louvre.

An account of the pedestrian's unusual journey from Ireland soon oozed out, when he became the hero of the hour, being lionized and treated to the good things of life, besides several pecuniary acknowledgments of deeper intrinsic value.

His companion, too, was warmly commended, and after many assurances of regard the pair went forth in quest of the landlord, who happened to be at home. The Irishman opened wide his mouth, and protruded his tongue, while the guide conversed with the Suisse, having, however, the discretion to keep silent, although the glances thrown at him by the Gallic concierge made him itch sorely at the tips of his fingers, as he afterwards said.

“Look here, me frind,” were his words crossing the courtyard. “The blayt av a calf or the squake av a bonneen is nathral musick, bud to see two sober min, who ought to hav’ sence, makin’ fools av their mouths, is wurs nor an attack av distemper or the prayte blight, God presarve us from ayther.”

Without any difficulty they were ushered into the presence of the baronet, a good-natured, generous-looking young man of some three or four and twenty years, who agreeably saluted them, saying,—

“Be seated.”

“Who d’ye mayne, sir?” the traveller interrogated—scratching his snowy fore-lock.

“Yourself and——”

“That’s not me nayme, yer honour,” was interrupted. “I’m plain Dominick Sullivan from Dangan Farm, an the estate av Sir Marvyn Marvyn at Artane, near

Dublin, Ireland, across the wather, an' av ye be that nobleman, me respects to yer honour's lordship."

The speaker made an awkward effort at curtsyng, while along with the guide he still remained standing.

"I am Sir Mervyn Mervyn," was pleasantly answered, "and I wish you both to be seated."

"Thank ye, Sir Marvyn, there's no refusin' that," replied the old man, putting his hat on the rich carpet, when with his coat tail he well dusted the equally soft chair before sitting on it.

The host in suave tones now inquired,—

"What is the nature of your business with me?"

"I hav a claim upon ye, Sir Marvyn."

"What, a claim? I have never seen you before," was carelessly rejoined.

“Thin the grayter the shame to acknowledge id,”—the voice of the strange stranger was well balanced and determined.

“Come, my man, there’s some mistake here; this will not do,” observed the landlord a little haughtily.

“There’s a mishtake, an’ id won’t do, ayther,” the former energetically echoed.

The tentative Englishman ventured on a remonstrance, saying, “I think, Sir Mervyn, you do not know that this aged man is one of your tenants, and that he positively walked every foot of the road between this place and Dublin to obtain justice; will you not be disposed to grant him favourable consideration?”

“It is impossible,” exclaimed the baronet, starting up with an air of astonishment.

The late speaker continued in grave tones, “I met him on the Boulevard des

Italiens three hours ago, surrounded by a wondering crowd, who did not understand him, and only that I read your name on a card he had pasted to his forehead, and brought him here, he might have been found in the *morgue*."

"Sir Marvyn Marvyn," now began the object of such interest, "six weeks agon I thrusted me wife an childr to the marcy av God," in a very low, sympathetic voice, "sthartin' to ax me landlord for a simple act av hanesty. From that hour to this I've niver known a bed to lye an, or, savin' yer prisince, takin aff me ould brogues."

To look from that softened, wrinkled face to those tanned boots and back again was the work of a moment; at the next the baronet stood beside his tenant, and cordially holding out his hand, said,—

"My brave old man, whatever you want from me shall be granted, but let me know

why you undertook such an unwise course, imperilling even life in this unheard-of way? ”

Respectfully declining the proffered tribute, the traveller said, “No, no, Sir Marvyn; I’ve niver yit forgot me proper plaice, an’ niver shall av I can help id, thank yer lordship all the same.”

The host good-humouredly proceeded, “I will not molest your scruples, but briefly explain, what is wanted of me, and why you did not apply to my agent, instead of undertaking such a cruel, unnecessary journey? ”

“Ah! Sir Marvyn,” he responded with vehemence, “’tis yer honour’s agint, Mishther Arkwright, as has cauzed all me throuble. Ye——”

“Tut, tut; you must be mistaken,” was imperiously vociferated.

“In throth I’m not, yer honour! Jist

kindly look here ; for the past nine years Misther Arkwright riz the rint rigularly, as ye can see from these eighteen half-yearly recayts. Av coorse id wor a hardship, but I sthood id workin' an, improvin' the little plaice, till it kem whin I cudn't continew ; an' bekayze I remonsthratid a thrifle he got into a tantrim, an' sarved me wid this notice to quit."

"If true, it is rascally conduct," exclaimed the baronet, "of which I know nothing, nor am I aware that the rents have in any way varied from what they were when I inherited the estate."

"Ah, sir: what a weight ye lift aff me mind, an' won't me poor wife be happy an' contint ; for, d'ye see, Sir Marvyn, I'd go an for iver payin' me last pinny av ye wish, only, for the love av heaven, don't turn us out av the home, where me childer wor born, an' mesel' an' me fathers afore me."

The guide was much moved to witness the tearful agitation of the old man ; drop succeeding drop being brushed aside by those thin, sinuous fingers, while the occasional deep sobs, their meet accompaniment, caused his whole frame to tremble throughout.

The young landlord paced the room in a furious mood, thinking of the trusted Arkwright ; at length thundering aloud, “ Perish these agents, they are the curse of Ireland ! ”

“ Oh, me sthars ! ” exclaimed his tenant, jumping up gleefully ; “ didn’t I always say Sir Marvyn Marvyn wor an English nobleman, an’ av I wanst seed him he’d do me jistice.”

“ I’m not a nobleman—that will do ”—repressing him, “ you shall have justice.” Touching the bell the servant appeared, to whom the baronet said, “ Take these two

worthy men in your care, see that they receive everything necessary to their comfort ;” addressing the guide, “ Do you know Paris well ? ”

“ I do, Sir Mervyn.”

“ Then I wish you to show your companion all its sights for a fortnight. If you cannot share his bed, at least come and take him out each day. There is a cheque towards your expenses, and call on me for another.” Turning to the old man he inquired, “ You will not decline to shake hands now ? ” adding, “ be content, my worthy friend, I will place you and yours beyond the reach of evil from any one, go now to your merited repose.”

As the traveller almost tottered from the room with overwhelming emotion, he paused, saying apprehensively, “ Oh, what will Misther Arkwright do whin he gits me home ? ”

“ Fear nothing, you will not be alone.”

“ Why so, Sir Marvyn ? ”

“ Because you have made me alive to my duty, and I shall go to Ireland also.”

CHAPTER VI.

It was a fair bright day when the proud young Lucy Neville, of Nevillstown, surrendered her future life into the tender guidance of the manly, intrepid heir of Darecourt.

The marriage had been solemnized in the quietest manner, in accordance with the wish of Lucy, now the Honourable Mrs. Vincent Darecourt, her husband, on the advice of their mutual friend Eustace Dillon, likewise preferring privacy.

“It will only alienate your father still more,” he urged, “without the necessity for so doing or any concomitant advantage.”

None knew what it cost Eustace to look on passively while the only hope or incentive in his life was being united to another—gone—gone—for ever;—but if there was one, after himself, worthy of, and who would live for her alone—surely, he thought, it could only be Vincent Darecourt.

At last he grew almost Platonic in regarding his circumstances. “She could never be mine,” musing, “why then wish to see her apart from another deserving of her?” But despite this theorizing, he could not resist sorrowfully thinking, “Lucy Neville is lost to me for ever.”

Vincent and he were the firmest of friends, the former with true innate honesty seldom hesitating to reveal his inmost self to Eustace, little divining the pangs his listener endured at the one recurring topic—Lucy, and nothing but Lucy.

The heir of Darecourt had had no communication whatever with his noble father since their last unhappy interview, and he tried to put aside all thought of his future rank, sooner than encourage the bitter feeling inseparable from its consideration. Previous to his marriage he wrote to Lord Darecourt, apprising him of it and soliciting the parental sanction, failing which he would go abroad with his wife and live in seclusion until their accession to the property, when they would return and settle at Darecourt, but no answer was accorded, and henceforth the breach became irreparably confirmed. Her husband, however, did not inform Lucy of this family disruption, under all circumstances, preferring to represent his parent as too infirm and prejudiced to be consulted for the present at all events. She was one who baulked not where others stood

still, and the advent of Eustace Dillon, extolling his friend, sealed her fate.

When alone, Lucy cast herself on the couch, exclaiming, "Oh, I am so very, very happy, may I prove worthy of his love, for, darling Vincent, you will never know the joy I could not avow of being called thine for ever:" and finding it impossible to resist longer, she rested her head upon those pale, pointed fingers, abandoning herself to the luxury of tears. Fast they traced their saline channels upon her calm marbled face, becoming the soothing valve for too much happiness, tranquillizing and softening her dream of life; but little she knew how soon this fleet, transparent tide of the beautiful imagery of an innocent first love would be diverted from its sunny course to plough through the deep cold rugged whirlpool of this world's misery and affliction.

The church in which the nuptial rites were celebrated was that of St. Doulough's, supposed to be the oldest stone-roofed sacred edifice now in use in Ireland.

There was an utter absence of the pomp and parade usually attending such ceremonies, and but for the clergyman, one bridesmaid, Eustace Dillon, and the two chief actors in this most momentous scene, the world would appear to know or care naught for those occupants of a seat in the chancel of that ancient, well-preserved church.

No pawing horses fretted away their useless time, idly champing well polished angular bits.

There was none of that endless display attendant upon the great in this little world. No, they all came to the church together.

The bride was calm, in harmony with

her grave, quiet costume, while Vincent looked joyous, unmindful of all but Lucy.

Eustace Dillon stood motionless in face and figure; he wished to see these two dear ones united, yet each word of the officiating clergyman and the answers that these words engendered smote like a consuming flame upon his heart.

At last the sacred ceremony is over, henceforth and for ever they are indissolubly linked, to march through life, whether in joy or sorrow, as one and only one.

The small group now assemble in the vestry, there formally to record their signatures in attestation of the marriage.

The celebrant handed Mrs. Darecourt a chair, and her husband having signed the register, Eustace Dillon next inscribed his name therein, having scarcely finished, ere Lucy's voice transfixed him—screaming,

“ Oh ! great heaven forbid, spare him,” and she sank lifeless on the floor.

Vincent entreated in agonized accents, “ My darling, what can have happened ? look up, Lucy, my love ; it is nothing ; look at me, speak to me,” tenderly chafing her temples, until gradually she manifested symptoms of returning consciousness.

Her first action on recovering from the fainting fit was to gaze hurriedly and searchingly around the vestry ; then she said softly in acknowledgment of his obviously anxious solicitude, “ I will be better in a moment, Vincent, thank you, but call Eustace.”

The latter still stood unmoved beside the writing-desk, pen in hand, with eyes rigidly fixed upwards, as when she had last seen him before swooning.

Vincent Darecourt shook his torpid friend lustily, saying, “ Lucy wishes to

“speak to you,” whereupon the former apathetically resigned the pen, and walked leisurely towards her; the clergyman, who had considerably retired, now came forward, wondering as he heard the Honourable Mrs. Darecourt inquire,—

“You saw them, Eustace?”

“Yes.”

“Three?”

“Yes, three.”

“Did they alter positions?”

“They did.”

“Tell me how.”

“They changed places respectively.”

“Anything more?”

“There is, but I—I——” hesitating.

“Do not conceal anything from me, Eustace,” she pleaded.

“They flew thrice around before leaving, Lucy.”

“Then we are all included,” was echoed

sadly, "but answer me," and she looked up hopefully, "did they fly away together?"

"Alas, no, they went slowly one by one."

"In mercy, spare us," was wailed; "the danger is at hand."

"Lucy, my life, do not madden me with this prolonged torture," exclaimed her husband.

"Ah, Vincent," she answered wearily, "I have brought desolation upon you already."

"Great heavens," he interrupted, "speak of anything, that I may see or brave it for your sake."

"It is vain, dearest," she continued, "my dread comes not from this world, but from the world beyond."

"Lucy, you but jest," was hastily rejoined.

“ Vincent Darecourt, hearken to your wife and weigh her words, for too well I know their significance,” interposed their mutual friend, in grave, sepulchral accents.

Lucy proceeded, “ A black gull has always been the forerunner of death or evil to one of my family. Lately, in presence of Eustace, two appeared, and but now, as that register was being signed, I saw three of these birds, so ominous of the future, settle over you, Vincent, Eustace, and myself, when I fainted.”

“ It is some creation of your fancy, dear madam,” urged the clergyman, seeking to allay her obvious apprehensions.

“ Sir, I myself watched their entrance and exit,” interrupted Eustace Dillon, in tones rebuking the implied doubt.

“ Why, there is Fanny Chalmers at the window,” exclaimed the young wife in

excitement pointing thereto, but they could observe no one.

Nevertheless, Lucy was convinced that she had seen Fanny gleefully and maliciously regarding them, and those revengeful words spoken at their last meeting returned anew in all their harrowing intensity, scattering like chaff before the wind every semblance of hope within her.

“I will go, dear Vincent,” she said at last, calmly, “but all your reasoning cannot alter my conviction. No, I pray heaven to help you, my darling husband, and you, Eustace, to meet with fortitude the calamity at hand, unknown in form, yet certain in its accomplishment.”

Gratefully acknowledging the fervid good wishes freely bestowed upon them by the benevolent pastor, they now emerged from the venerable church, and

arm in arm slowly wended their way down the small ill-planted avenue.

Under apprehensions thus painfully aroused, Lord Darecourt's son had to help his wife along, but gradually the air and quiet restored her fortitude. When they reached the outer gate, then indeed her heart fell, and her breath came and went in quick succession, as a stranger suddenly presented himself, inquiring, "You are the Honourable Vincent Darecourt?"

"I am."

"And you, sir, Mr. Eustace Dillon?"

"Yes."

"Then, gentlemen, I arrest you both in the king's name for high treason," and on a given signal a dozen soldiers rapidly closed around the captives, Lucy Darecourt again falling lifeless into her husband's arms.

CHAPTER VII.

“HA, HA, that’s the finishing touch,” said Robert Arkwright, casting an official letter upon the table towards his visitors, Dorrington Darecourt and Brien Flynn, and adding, “the scent is run close home now, and whenever you wish those two estimable people, Messieurs Vincent Darecourt and Eustace Dillon, shall be at your service and command.”

The Darecourt agent’s face lit up with a pleased vulgar grin of satisfaction, whereas Dorrington seemed somewhat listless and inert.

“The compact, Mr. Darecourt, between

us," continued Arkwright, facing towards the subject of his remarks, "is that you guarantee the attendance of the Outlaw, O'Grady, at Malahide Fair, for the purpose of handing him over to justice, on condition that I procure the arrest of Vincent Darecourt and Eustace Dillon for treasonable practices, you now being the accepted heir of Lord Darecourt, in preference to your cousin, discarded for his unworthy habits and associations."

"All that you have now represented, sir, I am readily prepared to endorse, the negotiation being already concluded between us by my uncle's agent, Flynn."

"Jist so. I'm always glad to see bysiness complayted in this riddy sort av a way," interposed their mutual ambassador blithely.

"Mr. Darecourt, there is the written authority from the Castle to have the

arrest carried out ; you can hold it for enforcement at pleasure."

"Thank you, Mr. Arkwright," answered Dorrington, accepting the official mandate. "Flynn wishes the arrest to be made when the marriage ceremony is just concluded, while I incline to preventing their nuptials altogether. What do you advise?"

"'Pon my word it is hard to decide ; of course, the downfall will be greater after the wedding than before," replied Sir Mervyn Mervyn's agent.

"But if unnecessary to our design, why inflict this additional blow?"

"Gintlemin, listhen to me a minnit—Miss Chalmers——"

"I forbid the introduction of that lady's name," was peremptorily asserted.

"Be id as ye say, Misther Dorrington," rejoined Flynn unabashed ; "bud the person to put O'Grady's thraysinable

litthers in Misther Dillon's pockets sez the time to do id is before goin' to church, as he won't be seen agin till he's an his thryal."

"This does not apply to my cousin."

"Id does, Misther Dorrington; ye see what hangs wan 'll kill t'other."

"Quite my way of thinking," interrupted Arkwright placidly.

"I still incline to my own opinion on the point," was iterated by Dorrington Darecourt.

"Run no idle risks, sir," observed Flynn measuredly. "Whin me lord hears av the arrist he moight softin like, bud the marriage wid Miss Neville 'll dhrive thim farther away thin iver."

"Of course it will," echoed his brother in office.

"In that light, I fear, there's no alternative, yet I am sorry for it." There

was a tone of real regret in Lord Darecourt's nephew's voice.

" 'Tis wise to bow to sarkumstances, sir ; at laystways sometimes."

" So it appears."

" Do ye know whin the marriage takes plaice, Misther Dorrington ? "

" Yes, Flynn ; the day after to-morrow."

" Just in good time to give word to the authorities and have the arrist skilfully effected," exclaimed Arkwright suggestively.

" Id wor very lucky Misther Vincent cudn't hould his tongue, av he did we'd niver know till id wor all over, an' the lot gon' abroad," observed Brien Flynn with a coarse laugh.

" How is that ? " inquired the former.

" Ye see they manage their pints so well at Nevillstown, shure divil a wan know'd a thing about id till Misther Vin-

cent wrote axin' his father, me lord, to make id up an' giv his consint; but I needn't tell ye the litthers niver pass'd me own hanest hands—ha, ha!”

“That was wisdom to a certainty.”

“Silence on both sides must embitter the situation.”

“Which I found out long ago,” responded Flynn; adding, “Sarrah a litther has raych'd ayther av their hands since I had the luck to meet Misther Dorrington here.”

“How do you prevent Dillon from receiving his friends' communications?” inquired Sir Mervyn Mervyn's representative.

“Aizey enof; money gits me the first peep at the post-bag, an' bein' too hanest to doubt, av coorse all I want I take.”

“Could they not inquire of the post-boy?”

“They did; bud money agin carried

the day, the big lie the gossoon tould thim bein' alriddy hatched an' ped for—ha, ha, ha ! ”

Arkwright joined in the mirth following this specious announcement, while Dorrington Darecourt, apparently interested and amused, thought the while, “ Here are two agents of large properties, the owners whereof must be guilty fools, otherwise, how can such ready reckoning in fraud be daily demonstrated to the ruin of those hapless tenants sacrificed between the landlord's unjust indolence and the middle-man's double greed, which the gross neglect of the former creates and licenses ? ” Gradually the subject veered around to O'Grady.

“ You think he is in the vicinity, Mr. Darecourt ? ” continued Arkwright.

“ If meeting and talking to him at Wentworth Waste, besides receiving his

letters for this Dillon, is not evidence of an existence, I do not know what else can be."

"Undoubtedly," observed the questioner proceeding, "you have one more appointment with him prior to the Malahide Fair?"

"Yes, that is so."

"When will you concert with us the plans for his capture?"

"Pardon me, my undertaking is to have him at the Fair, that is all; the rest being in your hands entirely."

"Thank you, that will suffice, Mr. Darecourt. This time he shall not evade the gallows. I will have two score of picked men for the arrest and a whole regiment, if need be, to march him to Dublin. The little so-called lock-up in the neighbourhood could be broken open by the confederates of any ordinary prisoner, much

less one of such power and weight with the peasantry as O'Grady."

"From my experience of him I think he possesses a large, open-hearted, kindly nature, roughened doubtless by deplorable habits of living."

"Tut, tut, Mr. Dorrington, one fact will serve to illustrate the dogmatism of his whole race. If you pass by the estate lately belonging to the O'Grady family you will find modern brickwork set in the granite wall adjoining the central entrance."

"What does this portend ? "

"In a passion the grandfather of the rebel turned his son out of doors, who resented the expulsion to such a degree, that on attaining the property he refused to allow his deceased parent to be carried for interment through the gates ; but instead thereof, caused a hole to be made in the wall, whereby the coffin was dragged

out. 'The portal shut against me while you lived,' he said, 'shall, I swear, be closed to you, even in death!' And faithfully the vow was kept."

"A sad instance of unnatural feeling on both sides," was observed by his pale listener, the succeeding pause being broken by Flynn asking,—

"Will ye kape out av the way a bit, Misther Dorrington, while the arrist takes plaice?"

"Certainly, I will utilize the opportunity for going on the yachting expedition we spoke of, and which you so strongly recommended."

"Be jabbers! that's the sthroke as sekures vict'hory," shouted the Darecourt agent, bringing down his hand with a heavy blow on the table, causing both his auditors to jump to their feet, the unexpected violent thud was so complete a surprise.

A general laugh followed, none enjoying the diverting *contre-temps* more than its author, who said, "I shware I can't understand what possissed me to do id—ha, ha, ha!" But Dorrington traced in its impulse renewed evidence of Flynn's belief in Miss Chalmers' powers of assistance in their mutual undertaking. Emptying their glasses, which had only once been filled throughout the lengthened conference, they prepared to set out on their return. Heavy and black appeared the prospect leaving that snug, warm, well-lit room, going into the open air, where a dog-cart was in readiness, and letting go the horse's head, away they went, at a steady pace, along the broad, unfrequented road in front.

"I would still prefer that my cousin's arrest took place before this intended marriage—it is needless cruelty," observed Dorrington, who in the pitchy night

could not see the white set teeth of his companion while firmly answering,—

“Whin id has to be don, sthrike home to them, and be doubly shure. Where two tum-bles wan is sartin to keep t’other down.”

“Did Miss Neville ever harm you, Flynn?”

“No, sir.”

“Nor my cousin?”

“Not intinshinally; bud he did, for all that.”

“If unintentionally you cannot blame him.”

“Blame him, sir,” (lashing the horse,) “who iver sthrikes me, false or fair, I’d hav me revinge! ay, av I liv’d fifty years ’twould com at lasth, an’ thin be welkem all the more, havin’ to wait so long.”

“This does not augur well,” thought his auditor.

“Look ye, Mither Dorrington,” con-

tinued the agent, pulling up the horse viciously and suddenly, "don't be de-sayved, yer only chance is to hav' yer couzin married, an' git him an' his wife sint where they'll niver be herd av agin."

"Have you a motive for saying this, Flynn?"

"Ay, sir," was spoken fiercely, "d'ye think I want to see all me hopes blastid, an' what I help'd to bild up thrown down about me ears? No, sir," he added vehemently, "I med id, an' I mayne to sthick to id."

"You surprise me by this unlooked-for zeal, if not passion."

"Am I to be blaym'd for presarvin' what no wan helped me to foind? Yis, sir, I repayt, 'tis time I look'd to mesel' whin I see the chance av all me sthrivin's shlip-pin' thro' me fingers, bekayze ye won't follow up what we so well stharked."

“I do not object,” was sharply answered.

“Thru, ye don’t say so in as many words, bud I’m for iver bringin’ facts afore ye, yit now ye seem as av ’tis agin yer grain to go any farther.”

“Avoid these anticipations : I wished to spare what I considered unnecessary pain,” (the driver ground his white-edged teeth anew ;) “however as it appears to be inevitable, there is an end to my hesitation, and it shall be as you suggest.”

The horse was now going forward at a settled pace, when its owner resumed in calmer tones,—

“Misther Dorrington, let me tell ye somethin’ sarious.”

“What is it ? ”

“That Lord Darecoort id be mighty glad this minnit to hav Misther Vincent back, ay, an’ beg his forgiv’ness in the bargain.”

“Is it possible? when did you hear this, Flynn?”

“His lordship tould me so himsel’ this mornin’, wid tears in his eyes, ‘Oh,’ sed he, ‘I know I won’t liv long, an’ I’m so unhappy at the thought av me son bein’ gon. I’ve wrong’d him, Brien,’ he wint an, ‘so I hav no paice av mind; he won’t even reply to me litthers.’ Av coorse ye know, Misther Dorrington, divil a litter iver wint, or iver will; bud ye’ve herd enof to make ye see ’tis right to git rid av thim both.”

“I’m much obliged to you, indeed; forgive me for not sooner acquiescing in what you advised.” This was said in a semi-penitential voice, which became more confident while adding, “I wish the marriage and arrest took place this very moment, for clearly we are on the brink of a precipice.”

“Thrue for ye, sir, bud only let him put the weddin’ ring an Miss Neville, thin we can shnap our fingers at thim all. Halloa, halloa!” he shouted, “what on earth is this?” swiftly pulling the horse aside, while both looked eagerly forward. Before them, coming straight along at a tremendous speed, were a magnificent pair of richly caparisoned bay horses, impelling a state chariot, flooded with light, and revealing the arms and quarterings of a nobleman, behind which stood two powdered footmen, while the wigged, rotund coachman sat immersed in a deeply draped hammer-cloth. Almost simultaneously with the dog-cart reaching the shelter of the road-side, the phantom-like, dazzling equipage shot past, an old man being its sole occupant.

“Grate heavens!” screamed Brien Flynn frantically, “’tis Lord Darecourt;

we're losth, av I don't sthop him," and wheeling the horse round he lashed it furiously onwards, pursuing that fast disappearing maze of flying light.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE landlord of the "Darecourt Arms" occupied his usual seat, and smoked his black, grimy pipe, upon the night of the day when Lucy Neville became a wife.

It was deemed politic by the powers that be, to effect the arrest of Vincent Darecourt and Eustace Dillon with as little publicity as possible, and the prisoners were installed in the dim, old-fashioned, rickety structure, answering the purpose of a local jail, without any resistance on their part, or unnecessary parade by their captors; hence, although so close to the village, not one therein knew of the

occurrence except the clergyman, who was discreetly silent upon a subject causing him much regret and concern.

Lucy Darecourt insisted on remaining in the wretched room occupied by her husband and their mutual friend, the other half of the prison being used by the soldiers, who only waited for darkness to begin their return march to Dublin. Unconscious of what was passing so near to them, the flow of mirth and whisky was up to the normal measure in all senses at the Darecourt village.

The old familiar faces were present as before, but there was one gap which could not be filled up, the chair in the far corner to the right of the landlord, with its back fronting the door, as you entered.

“Lord resth his sowl, he wor a daycint boy,” being inwardly ejaculated by each one of those who had been familiar with

the old soldier, Vincent Darecourt's body servant.

Quick in temperament, and readily alive to the keenest influences of emotion, the average Irishman has already formed the resolve to like or dislike with a celerity only equalled by his desire to prove this newborn conviction at any sacrifice.

Unconsciously, too, is this irrevocable determination arrived at ; though it may seem incredible, it is nevertheless true, that they are seldom wrong in their estimate of character.

The retiring, weather-beaten veteran, who spoke so fondly of a once happy home, while the agitation from within studded his hazel eyes, won their sympathy at a glance, but when it became known that he was wifeless and childless, the personal attendant on the young lord of Darecourt forthwith occupied a sacred niche, deep

down in their hearts, that they would not care to acknowledge openly for one alien in race and religion. Yet they intuitively knew it, and felt it was reflected by each and all towards him.

On the authoritative announcement that the old soldier had furlough from his earthly quarters, joining the ranks of his family in heaven, the chair was relegated to its present position of honour, the name of its well-remembered occupant being held in undying veneration.

In the midst of this night's unselfish, if superficial enjoyment, a very tall, powerful man presented himself suddenly at the door, and with voice excelling in suavity and richness, inquired, " Good people, may I come in ? "

" Yis, sir, an' why not ? " was instantly and mutually replied.

" Thank you, it is a very wild night, and

having to wait some little time, I thought, if you had no objection, I would add one to your number."

They at once divined that the stranger standing hat in hand before them was a gentleman, and as quickly did they respect him.

"Yer honour's not behouldin' to the likes av us for company, but av ye'd be contint to spind an hour undher me humble bit av a roof ye'r welkem, sir, to sthop as long as ye plaze," said the landlord, rising from his chair with a meek inclination of the head, speedily echoed by a buzz of approval.

"Then I shall take advantage of your hospitality," answered the unknown with a bland smile, "and I hope you will not còsider me, but do exactly as you would were I not present."

Our old acquaintance Tom rose, impul-

sively, saying, "Allow me, yer honour, to put away yer overcoat, 'tis viry wet."

"No, thank you, I am used to the weather," was carelessly responded.

"Ye unmannerly haythin," muttered the Widow Flanagan, "how d'ye know the gintleman has a second coat? mind yersel', or I'll be afther puttin' a sthopper an ye."

Every eye was now riveted on the stranger, for he had turned around the fated chair, and was quietly sitting in it, unmindful of the looks centred upon him.

Calmly and composedly resting his chin upon his hands, he looked dreamily into the cheerful flame, but his keen observers soon thought "he doesn't seem cheerful himsel'," and unanimously they wished he would stay in that seat, and draw it still closer to the fire, comforting himself, and banishing the heavy air of gloom now surrounding him.

“Arrah, what kep’ ye, Cup-o’-Tay?” kindly inquired the landlord, as that well-known personage appeared, reeking with wet, making his way leisurely into the room, with a cheery “God save all here!”

“I’ve jist ordher’d a toothful,” was the reply, “whin I get that inside ye’ll hav the informashun outside. Whew, what a noight id is,” he added, brushing the perspiration off his steaming forehead, and squeezing the dripping rain from out his moist locks.

“Iths not sthormy is it, Cup-o’-Tay?” inquired his early antagonist and friend Tom.

“No, Tom, not partikularly sthormy, bud ’tis rainin’ cats an’ dogs, an’ me belief is ’twill ind in a gayle; ye see the sunrise wor virry red:—holloa!” and he suddenly stopped—looking at that massive figure in the revered chair.

A wink, however, from the proprietor

banished all hesitation, whereupon he continued, "Ye know at an inquist in the big City they sthop ivery sowl passin' till they git twelve min for a joory, an' 'tis no matther who or what ye are, yer bound to go bekayze they'll take no exkuse."

"That I've heard afore," nodded the landlord.

"Thin," was resumed, "unbeknown, I wor goin' an me arrind, whin the watchman at a corner av a layne, sez, 'Here, misther, ye're wantid for an inquist.' 'Oh, jewel,' sez I narvously, 'ye don't mayne to say as how any accidint has occurred,' feelin' from me big toe to the tips av me fingirs, thinkin' somethin' had gon asthray, bud no, I wor safe and sound. "'Tis a man found dead,' sed the watchman ; whin I axed, 'Av he's dead, what d'ye want to bring him to life agin?' 'No,' sez he,

‘bud we want to know how he kem be his death.’ ‘I niver heard,’ sez I, ‘as how dead min blather their saycrits, altho’, mind ye, a woman might, I’d be bound, av she wor dispozed;’ howiver, the watchman pursheeded, ‘Ye’ll hav to becom wan av the joory; whin the docthor giv’s ividence ye’ll decide an what ye’ve bin tould.’

“ ‘Shuppoze the docthor tells lies,’ sez I, ‘an’ the corps desayves us as well, who’ll we turn to?’ ‘The crowner, av coorse, he’ll advize ye what to do.’ ‘Bud the crowner might be the biggist liar av the whole lot.’ ‘Not likely, howiver, av ye don’t belayve anywan, ye can——’ ‘What?’ I axed. ‘Appayl to the joory,’ sed the watchman. ‘Whin the joory might hav tould more lies,’ I shouted, ‘nor docthor an’ crowner put together.’ ‘Can ye write?’ he axed in a hurry. ‘I can,’ sez I. ‘Thin git a piece av clayne paper, pin an’ ink.’ ‘What for?’

‘ To put down yer hanest opinyan that, be-
layvin’ thim all to be liars, corps inclewded,
ye spared their feelins, not tellin’ the
trooth in publick this time, an condishun
they’ll mind in future ; ’ jist as we kem to
this sittlemint there wor a ruckshun in the
tipplin house opposit. ‘ What’s amiss ? ’ I
axed : afore me naybour cud budge any
reply, out ran a thief wid a bottle av
whisky in his hand, gallopin’ up the
sthreet, the watchmin after him, bud they
cudn’t git the robber, an’ insthid they lay’d
hands an the owner av the shop, in his naked
head, chasin’ his property. ‘ Oh, Lord,’
the publickan bawled, ‘ is that fair, the villin
robs me, yit ye don’t sthop him, while I
looz all for yer cursid inquist.’ ‘ ’Tis the
law,’ they said, and he marched widout
another word, I followin’. In a few
minnits twelve av us wor shworn. We
heer’d a grate dayle, bud upon me sowl the

only wan I firmly belayved wor the dead man himsel'."

"Why so?" interrogated the relict Flanagan.

"Bekayze the divil a sintince we cud git hould av to conthradict him in the whole time."

"Bedad, that's kewrious," she observed.

"He niver spoke at all at all, though bethune oursilves I think I see'd him now an' thin pull his face a couple av yards long, an' no wondher, for the lies wor somethin' awful."

"What wor the okashun av his stiff-niss?" inquired the proprietor.

"Bein' too lazy, the cowl'd got the bitther av the hate in him."

"But what med him so consaytid afore his time?"

"Id appears he wor lift a thing they call'd a leg-ye-see."

“ Bejabers, I see nayther his arm nor leg,” observed Tom innocently.

“ Take good care or ye’ll feel both av mine,” retorted Cup-o’-Tay warmly.

“ Tell us the vardict ? ” interposed the concerned widow.

“ That sayme,” answered the narrator, “ gev us a dayle av throuble, bekayze what they call the leg-ye-see wor in rayality whips av money, an’ poor craythure id upset him, I mayne the dhrink did, the vardict bein’ ‘death from nathural disorder,’ though to this minnit I can’t understhand why the leg-ye-see warn’t med responsible for the murther.”

“ Out in all this rain, Masther Walther ? ” were the surprised exclamations saluting yet another visitor, a tall, genteel boy, now standing in the room, who, smiling amid ruddy blushes, handed a letter to the contemplative stranger in that memorable chair.

This latter personage at once tore open the document, which he read, crushed it in his muscular left hand and cast it into the flames, while starting up, firmly pressing a soft hat upon his high intellectual forehead. Every trace of dejection was banished, and wonderingly his mute observers felt he was one of the few who insensibly trample the majority of their fellows under foot, passing them by unheeded in life's race.

None attempted to utter a farewell courtesy, much as they would like to have done so, nor did he seem to mind what was passing around, his heavy brows being knit together with a pre-occupied determined stare.

"There are a dozen," he said, addressing the juvenile messenger.

"Yes, sir."

"And the leader?"

"Yes, sir."

Reaching the threshold of the door, while tightening the collar of his coat, he turned round, exclaiming in sententious accents, "I'm going on a mission of danger, what two of you will share it?"

"We don't know yer honour," timidly ventured the landlord.

The stranger elevated his eyes and smiled sarcastically, observing, "I am a friend of Mr. Eustace Dillon, and he is in peril: will that satisfy you?"

"In piril," shouted several, leaping to their feet.

"Yes," was vehemently continued, "he and the young lord of Darecourt are prisoners, and very soon both will be on their march to Dublin as manacled felons."

"Wurra, wurra! O Lord, O Lord!" were the current refrains of despair and astonishment.

“Time presses,” he added; “who will follow me to liberate them?”

“We will, we will,” uprose on all sides.

“I only want two resolute men who can do my bidding, neither more nor less.”

“Take us, take us,” presenting themselves in pairs.

“Yer honour,” interposed the relict Flanagan, “av ye want two boys who’ll die in a good cause, there they are,” indicating “Cup-o’-Tay” and Tom Muldhoon.

“Agreed,” exclaimed the strange leader; “you both keep close to me, but speak not. Landlord, supply some flour and a thin rope to each, for which I will pay, and now farewell, my friends. May Providence help our efforts on behalf of the oppressed! Good-night, good-night. Come, Walter, your way is mine for a time,” adding with bitterness as they withdrew, “even that

moiety may be abridged by the capricious destiny of which I am the victim."

"Who is he?"

"What an illigint gintleman, a splindid craythure intirely," etc., etc., were the exclamations which came from each occupant of the inn parlour as the visitors departed ; the landlady, breathless and exhausted, stammering, "I sthole afther Misther Walther ; an' who d'ye think that great warrior is?"

"Who? who?" rose up in one united voice.

"God bless him, shure 'tis the bould O'Grady, the outlaw."

CHAPTER IX.

“VINCENT, dear, the papers are all placed as you desired, and on coming back, I could not resist the longing to look through the windows of the church, where I saw your cousin Dorrington, Mr. Dillon, and the detestably foolish bride. Ah!” she added, “I have got my revenge at last? and it is but the beginning of one wretched career.”

“I am sorry to hear you talk thus angrily,” observed her companion, with a reproving look.

“Once I hate,” she went on, unheeding him, “I hate for ever, and I will not rest

until I accomplish her downfall and that upstart daring husband ; attempting to palm himself off on the credulous as Vincent, heir of Darecourt ; what a pleasing surprise this will be for his wife when she discovers it. I pity you, Lucy Neville, indeed I do, ha ! ha ! ha ! ” followed in hollow sounds, at once harsh and discordant, whereat her auditor winced and bit his lip, resigning himself to the inevitable, while she continued her envenomed commentary. “ What a fall too for Eustace Dillon, the boon companion of this supposed heir, cut off from the mercenary assistance which of course he was promised when Miss Neville accomplished her degradation in wedding the adventurer. Upon my honour, I sincerely feel as though I could afford her a little active sympathy, a wife, and at the same moment her husband taken to prison, or any-

where so that he is banished, and after all, what a discovery—that the hero of her fancy was but an arrant schemer, pretending to the exalted station which will ere long be occupied by you, my real Lord Darecourt.”

Twining her arms playfully in his, she laughed outright, peering into his face to see him share her mirth; but the absence of this expected pleasure was so clearly revealed, that she recoiled from him in a petulant mood, exclaiming, “How glum you look, Vincent; one would think you are here against your will.” This remark came very near truth; but caressingly he took her—still resisting—to his side, whispering, “Nay, Fanny, dearest, you know I am not blest with your volubility of spirits and powers of imagination; therefore I cannot always behave as you wish, and as I should do

were I sufficiently gifted to understand you in everything."

Sceptical in habit and inclination she regarded him steadily if not distrustfully, but there was a lustre in his soft eye that amply sufficed, and the next moment they were hurrying along the sands towards the well-known breakwater.

It may be observed that at times Dorrington Darecourt, or Vincent as she supposed him to be, felt a veritable admiration for Fanny Chalmers; she was so unlike all he had hitherto known, far from perfect in several points, yet she tried to please him in so many ways, and succeeded, that in her presence he felt it very difficult to account for certain thoughts or ideas which, when absent from her, always rose up. Familiarity, even among the best of us, often brings much of what was cherished in the past into contempt; not so with

the presumed heir of Darecourt. Every time he met Miss Chalmers it was to think more kindly and almost pityingly of her, for in each idle, fitful look, word, or gesture, he read the avowal of her heart's devotion unresistingly placed at his feet, calculating though he knew her to be; but when alone, the conviction of her ungovernable resolve to conquer him, believing he was Lord Darecourt's son and heir, tore away the embroidered skein of art that she deftly wove and rapturously spun.

It had been resolved upon between them that during Lucy's fated marriage ceremony, they would go for a yachting expedition to Bray Head, so that the tragical *dénouement* thereat would have been fully completed by the time of their return, and after accompanying her younger sister to secrete the treasonable letters in Eustace Dillon's house, completing the link of evi-

dence against him and Lucy's husband, we find her and her assumed lord going towards the vessel, fully found awaiting them at the end of the embankment.

“ It is now coming to the slack tide,” she observed interestedly, walking briskly, “ and I want to reach the channel before it falls.”

Her companion was almost useless on board, but Miss Chalmers had ere now successfully navigated the yacht in many a stiff breeze, the knowledge whereof accounted for the non-attendance of the usual old salt, whose place was occupied by her young lord.

It certainly was a lovely morning, the sun shone out in brilliant splendour, and as it lit up the tiny, speckled, phosphorescent waves—swelling beneath that smart, three-quarter-decked boat—a feeling of soft, subdued languor stole upon Fanny

when, forgetful of all but her firm determination, she whispered in pensive tones, "Vincent, have you ever loved another more than me?"

The poetry of the scene had already influenced him, and with an earnestness previously unknown, almost startling her, he answered,—

"I have never cared for any but you, and I never shall."

"Oh, happiness!" were her burning words; but the speaker's greed was not yet satisfied, and decisively following up the unexpected success, she said, revealing a world of hope in those tremulous eyes and lips, "When will our marriage take place?" adding, "ah! say soon, Vincent dear."

"Yes," looking closely and fixedly into her upturned face, "our wedding shall be celebrated the first possible opportunity, in a manner becoming you and myself."

“ Even without your father’s consent ? ”
was nervously pleaded.

“ Yes, even without my father’s——”
he paused suddenly.

“ You were not going to recall my joy, were you, Vincent ? remember your promise.”

Fanny Chalmers put her forefinger archly to her mouth, continuing, “ The future lord of Darecourt should not challenge contradiction from a lady.”

“ You are an admirable girl,” he answered somewhat wearily. “ Of course your rule must be autocratic.”

Miss Chalmers smiled, but in reality she did not relish the grave look settling upon her betrothed’s face, now alive to the fact that imprudently he had said more, ay, much more, than was intended ; however, he thought, “ the terms are sufficiently vague, and the initiative has yet to come

from my side." Fortified by this comforting reflection, he bestirred himself about the yacht, but the disagreeable impression his late mood had awakened in Fanny's mind did not yet forsake her,—

"Nor will it," she mused, "until I am Lady Darecourt!"

With those three sails listlessly dangling from the mast, and the helm lashed hard up, they dipped and waddled through the placid sea, beguiling time by rigging a couple of reeling lines—with a revolving knoud-fly, thereby succeeding in catching a score or more of whiting-pollock, gurnard, etc., etc.

The tide had now turned and was fast making up channel, bringing with it a change of wind imparting renewed energy to the occupants of the belated yacht. The rudder swayed under the control of Fanny, and as the small vessel went about

at each tack, it became an interesting occupation for the supposed young lord to watch her nimbly jam up the sail in the breeze, and, as it became inflated, again to see her artfully “ duck ” while the sheet went by over her head.

Leaving old Dunleary on the right, with every stitch of canvas strained, they soon came abreast of Dalkey, the rocky Mugglins, Ballybrack, and so on, hugging the beautiful, spreading, sandy coast, until reaching Bray Head. The light craft was now dexterously floated into a rude harbour, when, leaving it in charge, its late occupants went ashore, shortly after being driven at a rapid pace to the Powerscourt Waterfall, where the scene is one of soft, beguiling enchantment, and long they lingered in its enjoyment.

It had fast settled towards evening ere they returned to Bray, and was there not

a startling transformation in the view seaward contrasted with what it presented only a few hours ago, the sky being very heavily laden with wild, dark clouds, driven furiously towards them.

A dull, low, dank atmosphere hung around the base of the dark, frowning prominence known as Bray Head, on the summit of which untamed flocks of the feathered kind found uncertain shelter, disturbed only by the wild mountain leveret romping in uncurbed licence.

The roaring wind swept the sandy shore with a hollow, sullen, suggestive moan, lifting inwards the distempered waves.

“Good heavens!” exclaimed the affianced of Miss Chalmers, “what shall we do?”

“Go back as we came,” was replied decisively.

“Why, this is madness !” he angrily retorted.

“Do not be alarmed,” she said calmly, “I am no stranger to this shallow appearance. Carry your eye yonder,” pointing channelwards, “and observe in the open sea there is nothing of this commotion visible.”

Her companion bit his lip, but she suddenly placed her arm in his, almost bearing him along, when in a voice of remonstrance he urged,—

“You know well I am a total stranger to exploits of this nature, and cannot render the slightest assistance in managing the yacht.”

“Do precisely the same as was required of you this morning.”

“But oh, Fanny dearest,” he pleaded, “let me entreat you to reconsider your determination. For heaven’s sake, aban-

don this insane resolve to return by water. We will drive home."

"To have myself spoken of as a coward?" she uttered reproachfully; continuing firmly, "No, Vincent, I will go; whether alone or not, you must decide for yourself."

Miss Chalmers began walking rapidly to where the yacht lay sleeping at anchor inside of the bar, while, revealing strange irritation and quivering muscle, the accepted young lord had no alternative but to follow. Both were already on board when they observed the absent fisherman hastening forward, but the sails had been hoisted and the yacht cast loose ere the cautious old son of Neptune came within hail.

"For God's sake," roared the weather-beaten man, heedless of the money lying at his feet, "put back, put back, hallo,

hallo'o, there's a hurrikane 'outside the bar. Ye'll be dhrowned, put back !”

However, the fierce rushing wind had now caught the smart vessel on the quarter, sending her furiously along. Pale as death sat Dorrington Darecourt, mute and terror-stricken ; and truly the heavens did expend their concerted fury upon them, it soon becoming apparent, even to that resolute girl, that no boat the size of theirs could live in such a surf. As night at last settled down, the woeful, wasted appearance Miss Chalmers' face had assumed shattered her companion's every semblance of self-possession.

“ Oh, tell me, we are not going to be lost, that we will not perish ? ” he asked piteously, lying at her feet.

“ It is awfully perilous, Vincent ; but promise solemnly, if I save you, that our marriage shall be delayed no longer ? ”

“As certain as that we are here tossed at the caprice of these elements, rescue me, and you shall become my wife whenever you wish,” was answered with the energy of his whole soul.

“We have one chance,” said Fanny; “remain passive and I will try to reach Dunleary harbour, which I know well; it is a hazard, but the wind is with us; hope for the best.”

“Oh, pity us, heaven! we’re lost,” she screamed the next instant, grasping the gunwale, while another shriek rent the air. But the boat righted, though the mainmast had gone by the board.

Later on a four-oared gig, fast pulling towards them, was hailed.

“Help, help, help us, save us, save Lord Darecourt’s son!”

“Liar,” replied a voice high above the storm. “Perish where there is water

enough to hide you, but not sufficient to wash out your crime."

Early the following morning the overturned wrecked yacht was found, but nothing more.

CHAPTER X.

THROUGHOUT the long wretched day in that more wretched hovel Vincent Darecourt and Eustace Dillon busied themselves with the still unresolved problem as to the cause of their incarceration, while Lucy, with bowed head, wept not; but the very composure of her misery made it the more earnest and real.

One idea took the place of another with a like groundless result, and though they thought and searched out every possible reason, there was no one point on which they could fix as ever likely to have occasioned their arrest.

Lucy, observing the pain that her allu-

sion to seeking aid from Lord Darecourt brought to her husband, did not pursue the theme further, nor could she gain an opportunity of exchanging views there-upon with Eustace Dillon, much as she desired it.

“I belong to no institution in this country ; indeed am unknown to almost every one here, so I cannot realize it,” remarked the newly-made Benedick.

“And having associated with you alone, Vincent, it is equally incomprehensible to me,” added his fellow-captive.

“Go home, my love, and when we reach Dublin I will have the authors of this ignominy brought to condign justice, whoever they are ; but for the present it only embitters our mutual distress to see each other here. Do, Lucy ! Oh, pray return to Nevillstown, to-morrow we shall be honourably free.”

“My duty is to share your perils, Vincent, and I mean to do so,” was unhesitatingly answered.

“Our separation cannot be longer than a day, when I will have torn aside this cloak of infamy, revealing the nefarious schemers to their utter discomfiture.”

“No, I must accompany you to Dublin, where the large interest of my family may be utilized on our behalf,” and her irrevocable determination had to be silently acquiesced in.

The door of their damp, shadowy cell was locked on the outside, and guarded by one sentry pacing in measured step up and down, to be relieved at intervals by another stolid mundane disciple of Mars. With cheese, bread, onions, bad whisky, and tobacco, the soldiers eat, drank, and puffed the hours away in their unwholesome quarters, where the

moist, fetid exhalations found a meet asylum.

It is not to be wondered at that under these combined influences the day wore heavily on, or that the vengeful storm now bending all beneath its aërial might found them fast sleeping in that surcharged, poisonous atmosphere.

The prisoners attentively listened to the howling wind, weighing heavily upon their spirits, while mutely in darkness turning their longing eyes towards the door, they waited a signal to begin their expected march to the city jail.

Having resisted every appeal to depart, Lucy Darecourt now sat as rigid as her companions, her ears painfully alive to each phase of the changeful storm, unvaried only in its terrifying power and continuance.

“List!” was uttered softly, “I hear a strange passing step.”

“ Nothing but the tread of the sentry,” quietly responded Eustace Dillon.

“ It was not,” she replied affirmatively. “ I heard a different one ; and hark, it is there again.”

“ Only your agitated nerves, my love,” observed her husband—*sotto voce*—trying to look into her face, but the horrible darkness forbade the effort.

“ The prayers of our childhood may not yet be unrequited. Have courage, my fond husband. I repeat emphatically I heard unusual footsteps; they cannot mean friendliness to the soldiers, else why this secrecy ? ”

“ Alas ! alas ! I dare not indulge your delusive hope,” Vincent Darecourt answered in plaintive tones ; but immediately afterwards all three started to their feet, as silently the lock was undone, the door opened and reclosed, leaving a tall figure

confronting them lantern in hand, who said,—

“ I am sorry to meet you here, Eustace Dillon, and you, Mr. Darecourt ; but I crave pardon,” uncovering. “ I forgot, there is another yet more deeply wounded,” addressing the lady. “ May a stranger present his warm congratulations to you, for, though dark has been this day, ere its close your husband shall be free.”

“ Oh, sir, do not mock me by a vain illusion.”

“ There is the door, madam, and this key will set all at liberty whenever you please.”

“ Why, he cannot be the jailer,” she wonderingly exclaimed.

“ No, Lucy,” interposed Eustace confidently ; “ he is——”

“ Not here,” and the stranger grasped the

speaker's arm, continuing, "oblige me by withholding my name for the present."

"Let us depart," pleaded the lady, her renewed anxiety becoming uppermost.

"There is no necessity for undue haste, the night being exceedingly tempestuous and likely to continue so. May I suggest, Eustace, that I ought to be enlightened as to the cause of your being here, and the course you intend to pursue on leaving?"

"To neither question can I reply accurately. I only know that I was arrested with my friend this morning on a charge of treason, and that for hours past we have been waiting the soldiers' orders to march to Dublin."

"Which shall not occur. Your captors are my prisoners," observed the tall stranger.

"Impossible," ejaculated Vincent Darecourt.

“They will find it is a stern reality when they wake up,” replied the previous speaker, motioning towards the adjoining room ; “but come,” he continued, “Eustace, have you no clue to the origin of your incarceration ? ”

“No ! ”

“Nor to any individual ? ”

“To none.”

“Have you, Mr. Darecourt ? ”

“No.”

“This is surprising.”

“It is a mystery,” was echoed by Lucy Darecourt, proceeding in accents of entreaty, “pray, sir, allow us to depart.”

“I understand and sympathize with you, madam, but you will permit me to consider how I can best serve my friends ; at present not knowing the quarter from whence the blow has been struck, it is difficult to meet and overcome it.”

“The soldiers may awake and frustrate all your plans.”

“Trust me for your safety ;” the iron smile and calmness of the speaker reassured Lucy as he inquired, “Of course, there is no foundation for the charge in your case, Mr. Darecourt ?”

“Not the slightest.”

“Nor in mine,” added his fellow-prisoners.

“Cannot you point to some circumstance that might have led to the arrest ?”

“I cannot.”

“Nor to any person predisposed to injure you ?”

“Yes,” exclaimed Eustace Dillon, “there is a wretch who would sacrifice me if he could, but this matter is wholly foreign to him ; and, thank heaven, with him alone am I at enmity.”

“In the absence of all probable sources, let me inquire the name of that inestimable person so anxious to secure your weal in another world, if not in this,” followed with a slight laugh.

“Brien Flynn, agent to Lord Darecourt,” was responded in bitter accents.

“What ! ” exclaimed the questioner in astonishment ; “the very man whom I warned Mr. Darecourt against.”

“Warned me,” echoed Vincent, “why we never met before.”

“Amazement ! Not met before,” he blankly and incredulously rejoined.

“Yes, sir, I repeat I never saw you previous to your entering this miserable habitation.”

“You were Miss Chalmers ? ”

“No, sir, my name was Neville.”

“Am I dreaming ? ” escaped from the tall figure.

"This is something anomalous," observed Eustace Dillon.

"Anomalous," cried the preceding speaker, "but that you are present, I would," hesitating, "no, I cannot say it. Eustace, did you preserve all my letters as I have your replies?" becoming heated.

"Knowing nothing whatever of the former I could not have sent the latter," was composedly answered.

"Know nothing of them? why, Mr. Vincent Darecourt has been the medium for our communication."

"Certainly not," interrupted the individual referred to. "I declare that until this moment I never met you, nor at any time received communications either from or for you."

Producing a roll of papers the stranger held it under those concentrated

rays of white light, issuing from his lamp, and inquired,—

“Are not all of these in your handwriting, Eustace Dillon?”

“No, they are not.”

“You brought them to me as being such, sir?” turning to Vincent.

“Impossible,” the latter answered, but bending closer to the flame and examining the documents, the stranger fiercely started, asserting,—

“Sir, you are not Lord Darecourt’s son.”

Eustace Dillon interrupted with greater haste and emphasis than was his wont, saying,—

“This is going too far. I have known my friend here, ay, ever since we were both little children playing at his mother’s knee.”

The late comer stood thoughtfully silent, but the young wife who had

excitedly listened to the trio, recalling many mysterious things in the past, now observed with deliberation :—

“ Vincent, when upset out of the boat——”

“ And you, dearest, saved my——”

“ No, no,” she continued, “ you recollect then seeing your father’s agent in company with another man ? ”

“ I do.”

“ And they seemed to be gleefully looking towards you.”

“ So I thought.”

“ Then this gentleman, our friend,” indicating the powerful attentive stranger, “ has since met Brien Flynn and a young man together.”

“ Quite right, so I have, and further, I distinctly heard the former say to Miss Chalmers, that that young man was Vincent Darecourt.”

“Have you seen this young lady in either of their society since?” Lucy asked.

“Yes, several times alone with the agent’s companion.”

“You remember, Vincent dear,” continued his wife, “passing by two individuals, and I afterwards told you one of them was Miss Chalmers.”

“I do.”

“And that this morning I recognized her face at the church window fixed on us with a malevolent look.”

“But what does all this prove?” interrogated her husband.

“That your father’s deputy, his unknown associate, and Fanny Chalmers, are the cause of your incarceration, and whatever else may follow in the treacherous future.”

“Prophetically spoken,” responded the stranger, “to which I will add my con-

viction that my letters to you, Eustace, written in the belief that your *vade mecum*, Mr. Vincent Darecourt, was a reality and not a spurious simulation, have been utilized to bring the vengeance of the law on both your innocent heads."

"It is a tortuous conspiracy," observed Vincent, "clearly embracing the surreptitious possession of my own and even of my father's communications."

"Hush, what noise is that?" uttered the unknown; continuing softly, "they are waking, follow cautiously, wrap yourself up, dear madam. Nay, I insist on the acceptance of this overcoat, the night is a harsh one for such as thee."

He had a sympathetic voice, that could not be denied, while his manner was at once debonair and dauntless.

Extinguishing the light, as the commotion became audible in the adjoining

apartment, they reached the door through which the wind swept mercilessly, when he said in tones unique in their compressed clearness and force,—

“There is but one chance for you both, and that is to make forthwith for Old Dunleary Harbour, hiding somewhere on the coast, until Lord Darecourt has been communicated with: as to this person tampering with the name of his son; no matter how the Government may regard my letters or myself, the truth remains that neither you, Eustace, nor Mr. Darecourt, have received them, an incontrovertible fact which with time we can be able to establish.”

Neither whispered what each felt and knew, that it was an awful night to cross Dublin Bay, but Vincent entreated,—

“Lucy, my love, we will go, and trust in Providence. You must return home

under the guidance of our benefactor, whom but now we know, but who has already earned our deepest gratitude."

"Which we will prove, and because his nature is so noble he will forgive a weak girl who owns to an unchangeable resolve."

"Name it, fair lady."

"To live or die by my husband's side."
The agitated speaker lowered her head.

"Be it so," answered the stranger;
"the thought is chivalrous even from a wife," and he passed into the roadway.

The clamour among the imprisoned soldiers was now very great, and although their precise words could not be recognized, the loud assaults against the door, barred and doubly secured on the outside, startled Lucy, who clung to her spouse.

"Peace, drivelling fools," exclaimed the captor, thereby instantly quelling the

tumult. “ Know you that your guns and ammunition are gone, your sentry a prisoner in my hands, and that I would send you one by one unprepared to meet that God of justice, whom you defame by your acts, but that I wish to teach the *canaille* Saxon the chivalry of mercy.”

In simple wonderment Lucy Darecourt followed through the wild storm which caused them to pause at almost every step. At length they reached the memorable breakwater, over which the feathery spray came in blinding showers, making their way to where on the lee side an open four-oared gig lay sleeping in serenity.

“ Quick, my lads,” commanded the leader abreast of the boat, “ bring the captive here,” when immediately issued from behind the rocks our friends Cup-o'-Tay and Tom, between whom stood a foot-soldier.

“Untie his hands.”

“Yis, sir.”

“The cartridges are drawn?”

“Ivery wan, sir.”

“And the carbines?”

“Are here, yer honour.”

“Throw the ammunition into the tide,” continued the tall chief, “give the prisoner the guns.” Turning to the latter. “Here is some money, I cannot spare more. You need not tell your comrades of having been forced to drug them and deliver up their weapons under the pressure of my cocked flint. Now for the dark wave and liberty! Man the boat; and wrap the lady well up; stroke oar for me; Eustace, you pull the bow, and you, my lads, take the middle berths. One word” (to the soldier). “Do you know who caused the arrest of my friends?”

“I do not, sir.”

“ Thank you ; but should you ever meet him or them, say I will be a stranger to peace until I have his or their blood—life for life.”

“ Who are you, sir ? ” meekly asked the red-coat.

“ Michael O’Grady, the outlaw,” he answered, stepping into the roomy gig and shoving it off.

CHAPTER XI.

THE topic at the dinner-table of the vice-regal circle was the arrest of the heir to the Darecourt title and estates. His father being known as one of the most unswerving adherents of the Government, the only son had come to be regarded, of course, as the successor to his parent in every sense. Profound, then, was the astonishment of the Castle magnates when it transpired that the first general knowledge of young Darecourt having returned from the completion of his collegiate career was the fact of his seizure for treasonable practices in connexion with that notorious traitor O'Grady and another.

Whilst universal sympathy was manifested towards his noble parent, the son became as strongly loathed, although unknown personally to those evincing such active feeling on the subject. But later on news arrived of the escape of the accused through the daring of the Outlaw; this event increasing the official passion to something akin to frenzy, which found immediate vent in the degradation of the soldiers forming the escort, and in renewed efforts to effect a rearrest.

Throughout these perturbed proceedings Lord Darecourt did not appear in any way concerned, which was universally ascribed to his long period of enforced retirement, although the executive had expected some opinion from him if only in writing. The pleasure of his Excellency therefore became strongly manifested as a letter was placed in his hands from that tardy nobleman,

introducing an esteemed friend, Major Claremont, the bearer, who would fully represent the writer's views upon so unfortunate and delicate a matter as the suspected treason of his son Vincent ; the missive went on as follows :—

“ Major Claremont is a young man in whom your Excellency can repose the utmost reliance, and any opinion you may be pleased to communicate to me through him shall have my ready endorsement and acceptance.”

“ Very good, show the gentleman in,” said the semi-king with a pleased look, as the messenger bowing withdrew, the next moment returning with Lord Darecourt's *protégé*, whom the astute Viceroy asked to be seated, pretending to read the letter, while in reality he was covertly scanning his visitor, the result of the scrutiny being evidently of a satisfactory

nature, as, with outstretched legs lolling in his large velvet armchair, he proceeded,—

“ You are on very intimate terms with my Lord Darecourt, I perceive.”

“ I assume, your Excellency, he has kindly notified as much.”

“ He has, and I am glad to welcome you on this account.”

The visitor bent a lowly acknowledgment, but remained silent.

“ What is your regiment, Major Claremont ? ”

“ The —— ”

“ Ha, I recollect, an old College chum of mine is your colonel—Lord——, is he not ? ”

“ Your Excellency is quite right,” was composedly responded.

“ You are here on leave I presume ? ”

“ I am.”

“ For a prolonged stay ? ”

“Well, I hardly know; indeed, my visit is principally in reference to this misadventure of young Darecourt.”

“A melancholy event in truth,” and the Viceroy looked warm.

“It is, your Excellency; Lord Darecourt’s position is not a pleasant one.”

“Major Claremont, it is a very cruel one to be placed in by an ungrateful son and disloyal subject, who, however, shall meet with the fullest rigour of the law, together with his infamous companions, especially the well-known rebel O’Grady.”

“This latter personage seems to absorb considerable public attention, from what I have heard,” listlessly observed the new-comer.

“He does, and is likely to continue to do so until his repeated crimes are expiated upon the scaffold—an event not far distant, depend upon it.”

“Ha, then your Excellency has a clue to his whereabouts?”

“We are not far from him at this moment; but even you, Major, can bring us nearer the desired object.”

“My ready services are at your Excellency’s command with extreme pleasure,” was answered with much suavity.

“Come nearer to me, young man. You seem very frank, and I shall be equally unreserved with the bosom friend of my Lord Darecourt.”

“I am honoured beyond my deserts, I fear,” said the officer, quietly bringing forward his chair to the desired point, where he waited respectfully listening for the exalted host’s next words, who continued,—

“I presume you are very familiar with Lord Darecourt’s rebellious son?”

“I am.”

“Of course you are not acquainted with his confederate, that arch-traitor O’Grady?”

The visitor’s look and smile wore so innocent an expression of genuine amazement, that the noble speaker appeared much amused, adding,—

“What an idle, silly question to put to a perfect stranger coming to this country—ha! ha! ha!—upon my word it was—ha! ha!” and they both laughed long and heartily.

Refreshment was now handed to Major Claremont, and after bowing and drinking to the Viceroy, the latter resumed, wiping his eyes still moist from the recent merriment,—

“You could do the State a great service by employing your tact and influence to secure the rearrest of Vincent Darecourt and his confederates.”

“ Your Excellency has but anticipated what his father himself counsels.”

“ Capital news indeed,” exclaimed the man of highest rank in Ireland ; and stretching forth his hand he cordially shook that of his visitor, saying warmly,—

“ We are agreed then ? ”

“ Yes, your Excellency ; you wish to secure Lord Darecourt’s son ? ”

“ I do,” emphatically.

“ So do I, and this—what is he called ? —the rebel, I mean.”

“ O’Grady,” quickly replied the Viceroy, “ whose capture is of more importance than any other dozen criminals.”

“ I also intend to provide for him ; but is there not one named Dillon ? ”

“ Oh, he is hardly deserving notice, a convenient jury and an obliging judge—indeed, all the officials are such—will make short work of him.”

“Has your Excellency any doubt of their actual guilt?”

“None whatever. I have seen the pile of documents referring to the case, but the principal links are the letters from the Outlaw to young Darecourt and his replies.”

“What a fortunate possession,” exclaimed the visitor, continuing,—“May I inquire how these papers were procured?”

“At the residence—indeed in the clothes of the accomplice Dillon.”

“There can be no question of their authenticity, I presume?”

“Oh, none; experts have already pronounced them to be *bonâ fide*; besides, I forgot, you, Major Claremont, must know the writing of Lord Darecourt’s son?”

“Yes, perfectly.”

“Then oblige by favouring me with

your opinion. I will send for these letters for your inspection."

Soon afterwards the Viceroy beheld his visitor examining the several epistles with the utmost precision, from which he at length looked up, saying with marked emphasis,—

"I am convinced that this is not the handwriting of Vincent Darecourt."

"Impossible, Major Claremont, I repeat it is impossible."

"And I, your Excellency, crave permission to persist that it is as I assert. I am of all others best acquainted with his caligraphy."

"There is an astounding discrepancy somewhere," was the Viceroy's displeased remark, as he walked backwards and forwards, unwilling to think the missives were not as he had represented and believed them to be, yet unable to reconcile this

conviction with the positive assurance of his trusted visitor.

After a pause, the Lord-Lieutenant confronted the young officer, observing,—
 “I have been anxiously thinking how to unravel this mystery, but with no success; is there any ready plan you could suggest whereby it can be solved?”

“There is but one way, your Excellency.”

“Name it, please?”

“Submit the letters to Lord Darecourt for his testimony.”

“A capital idea indeed; but the difficulty is that his lordship, being an invalid, cannot come to us.”

“With your Excellency’s sanction I will take them to him, returning forthwith with his answer, and until this is done, any step taken in the interim might prove unjust.”

The Viceroy cogitated deeply, then said aloud,—

“Major, your argument is right in point of fact, one of my aides shall accompany you with the papers, obviating the necessity for your return ; after Lord Darecourt has decided upon the writing we shall know what course to pursue.”

A gleam of anger shot from under the visitor's brow at the humiliating thought, “Does he mistrust me ?” but the apprehension quickly passed away.

Summoning an aide-de-camp, the Lord-Lieutenant said,—

“Major Claremont, I fancy our interview this day will be regarded as no ordinary one, should the results which I anticipate be accomplished, and I rely on your zeal and discretion to aid us in a cause of such import to the country, and certain to reflect much credit upon yourself.”

“My reward, your Excellency, is already gained in the conviction that what I am doing will promote justice, although it may run in a different channel to that which you expect; in any case it is not unlikely that this meeting will prove eventful.”

On the staff-officer entering, his superior said, “Allow me to introduce to you Colonel Bagshot, Major Claremont,” accompanied by the ordinary conventionalities of presentation.

The former suddenly pulled up, arresting the bow he was gracefully making, as some vague recollection of having seen the face of the gentleman before flashed upon him—while unmindful of his hesitation, the Viceroy observed confidently,—

“Major Claremont is a valued and trusted friend of Lord Darecourt,” at once putting the two listeners on the best of terms.

Shortly after the Lord-Lieutenant rose saying,—

“Colonel Bagshot, you will please to take these documents, and go with the Major to Lord Darecourt’s for his lordship’s opinion regarding their authenticity,” handing him a folded parcel.

“If I might venture upon a suggestion,” interposed the visitor, “I would urge your Excellency to leave all the papers intact for examination and contrast, one may materially assist the other in arriving at a conclusion.”

“Very good counsel,” were the approving terms of reply, “take them all, Colonel ; and now good-bye, sir, I am pleased to make your acquaintance, one not readily to be forgotten.”

“Your Excellency is most kind and flattering—and I have little doubt when the object we have in view is attained, you

will think more and oftener of me ; ”
nearing the door, he quickly added,
“ Will you graciously accord me permission to wait upon you privately, should such a necessity arise in furtherance of your commands ? ”

“ Certainly,” returned the ruler of Ireland, seating himself and writing on an official stamped form, to which he appended his signature, “ Bearer is to pass unquestioned.”

When the aide-de-camp and his new friend got near the central gate in the castle yard, the latter called out,—

“ Oh, what a misfortune, I forgot his Excellency’s written reply to Lord Darecourt’s private letter, and must return for it,” going backwards a step, when he was overtaken by the Colonel, politely saying,—

“ Pray do not trouble, I will find it

for you, as I know the shortest approach to the apartment."

"Thank you very much," he courteously responded, "I will relieve you of this," indicating the parcel destined for Lord Darecourt, "and await you here," which the aide-de-camp handed to him, and disappeared in the viceregal quarters.

This recent visitor to his Excellency, the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, was no sooner alone, than with a bound he turned to the right speeding across the wide square to where the stables stood,—shouting to the English groom, "Quick, saddle your fastest horse without delay. I am going on urgent business for the court." And under the influence of the formal pass with the Viceroy's autograph, supplemented by a large silver coin, that accepted representative of the Rt. Hon. Lord Darecourt was already in the

saddle, disappearing at a stiff gallop by the side of the Birmingham Tower towards the back gate of Dublin Castle.

However, just as he reached this exit, the sentry thereat saw the well-known form of the aide-de-camp in the distance, gesticulating towards the horseman while still running forward.

“Colonel Bagshot wants you, sir,” observed the soldier respectfully, standing in the way of the equestrian.

“You are mistaken, it is not for me, here is my authority,” producing the recognized countersign—and in another instant, as the sentry saluted, steed and rider galloped up Ship Street, and were immediately lost to view.

“Did you not see me motion you to stop the miscreant?” wrathfully exclaimed the irate officer, who now came up to the gate breathless and steaming.

“Why, Colonel, he showed me the Lord-Lieutenant’s orders,” the soldier still stood in saluting posture, inquiring, “I hope there is nothing wrong, Colonel?”

“Yes, some valuable papers and the horse have been stolen by him.”

“Who is he, Colonel?”

“I do not know; but stay, what is this?” and stooping, the angry speaker picked up a letter dropped by Major Claremont, whilst almost simultaneously with opening it, the sentry in amazement heard the aide-de-camp exclaim,—

“Perdition! it is O’Grady the Outlaw. I thought I recollected the face,” reflectively, “and so it was Arkwright’s wife who effected his escape from prison.” Colonel Bagshot’s eyes were still riveted on the recovered note, which ran thus:—

“They call you Michael O’Grady the traitor; but you saved my husband’s life,

and in gratitude I shall accomplish your freedom ; may your future be a happy one. Remember that promise of mercy, spare Robert Arkwright, from whom and this country I am fleeing for ever. Farewell.

“ His unhappy wife,

“ AGNES.”

CHAPTER XII.

“ FIFTY guineas to land two gentlemen in Galway.”

“ I thought we selected the Arran Islands ? ”

The first speaker replied in an undertone, “ I trust no one—Galway is the safest place ; ” repeating aloud, “ Fifty guineas to land two gentlemen in Galway ! ”

“ ’Tis a wild noight an’ a long journey,” suggested the calculating fisherman.

“ And a good sum to earn, my man.”

“ Yis, that sayme is throe ; bud whin d’ye want the smack, sir ? ”

“ At once ; there must be no delay.”

“Why, we’ve no purvishun an boord.”

“Get whatever you can, I will pay for it.”

“Thin I’ll say agreed; ’tis a bargain, yer honour.”

“Very well. How many hands do you carry?”

“Mesel’, brother, an’ a gossoon. Here, Jim, show yersel’ to the gintleman.”

A stout, fat boy of some fourteen or fifteen now stood upright, with a small sou’-wester in hand, turning his grey eyes towards the ground.

“You will not be afraid of going a long way from home at this hour?” observed a kindly voice.

“No, sir, I’m riddy this minnit,” was answered readily.

“Thin be aff. Git yersel’ toidy, an’ swallow somethin’ afore ye sthart,” interrupted the parent, putting his hand in

his loose trousers pocket, which contained nothing but a "backy-box," jack-knife, and other small sundries, when the stranger came to the rescue, saying,—

"Here, my lad, do as you are advised," at the same time giving him some loose money.

"Thank yer honour," came decorously from father and son, as the gentleman who had first spoken again addressed the proprietor of the large fishing-smack of rude outlines but immense beams, saying,—

"We will give you an hour to have every requisite on board and to slip the cable."

"All right, gintlemin, id 'll be jist as ye say," was responded in a business-like voice.

Arm-in-arm these two customers of the fisherman walk towards the smoky-

looking cabin wherein, disposed as the rude belongings would best permit of, Lucy Darecourt and O'Grady awaited the return of the trawler's clients ; Cup-o'-Tay and Tom, having been already paid (which money they accepted with reluctance), were sent on their way rejoicing to Dublin.

“ You see, my dear madam,” observed the Outlaw with a grave look, “ those who suffer most know most, and my practical experience of the hard, partial laws of the country enables me to give advice unattainable under ordinary circumstances.”

Casting anxious glances upon that fine, earnest face, Lucy watched him of whom she had heard so much with an abiding interest, as he proceeded,—

“ The web surrounding your husband is of no ordinary kind ; but consists of a combination of cunning and falsehood. At any time this compound would be

dangerous ; but it is doubly so now, when we know not where it begins nor how far it may have extended."

"But oh, Mr. O'Grady," she uttered plaintively, "it is so hard to say we must part: cannot we go together?" and the speaker looked towards him hopefully.

"It will be harder if, through imprudence, you suffer mayhap for years."

"Pray do not anticipate such a dreadful misfortune!" she pleaded.

"Then be reasonable," he said ; "separate from your husband until we ascertain the charge laid against him and who are its authors. As to your accompanying him it would render recognition inevitable."

"Perhaps—nay, you must be right, and I would feel satisfied if you shared their temporary seclusion, to emerge from it with them, restored to happiness and doubly endeared to me and mine."

His large eyes expanded, a mist settling between him and the fire whither he looked, while, in a deep subdued voice, he replied, "How long ago it seems since words like those you have now spoken saluted my ears. Once, a voice and a look such as thine thrilled through my soul and lit up its deepest feelings ; but the grave has long held my mother its prize, since when I have had no home, no love, none of those living dreams of happiness—born in heaven—blessing us on earth, and still awaiting us beyond. No, I have nothing left but the memory of my own and my country's wrongs growing deeper day by day."

"I could not dare to trespass on such grief ; but will it not at least mitigate it, and also benefit your friends, if you go with them ? Do let me entreat you. I would be reconciled even to separation from Vincent were you to accompany

him." She held out her frail hands imploringly.

Unmindful of her appeal, he urged determinedly,—

"One must remain to watch the ebb and flow of this rank current of conspiracy, prepared to fathom it to its lowest depths, until the foundations shall have been revealed. Mine be that work of danger!"

"Thus eager to suffer for others," observed the young wife sadly.

"No, no," was exclaimed; "you over-rate my efforts," continuing, "I am denied the companionship of my fellow-man, except by stealth, and that love of old Ireland, which the world is powerless to subvert, is my one besetting sin. They cannot," he added vehemently, "drive me from the land of my birth, for the reason that I will not leave it. No, let my end be by the musket-

ball or the gibbet, I care not, so that I die facing our foes. Thus it is, madam, that that which you regard as danger comes to me like scented perfume, alluring most where it is the greatest."

"Oh, Mr. O'Grady! would that I could contribute to your happiness!"

"You can to your husband's by allowing him to retire in safety until I reveal the treacherous plot encompassing both of you."

"Are you certain of success?" she timidly inquired.

"Yes," he replied proudly; "I will know the labyrinths of the conspiracy and its authors before three days have elapsed."

"Then I am content; Vincent and Eustace may go. This period will not be very long to await their justification."

"Mrs. Darecourt, you have spoken well: remember, my undertaking is in three

days hence to place in your hands actual proofs of this confederation in its most intricate phases."

"May heaven requite your generous devotion," she responded with feeling.

"Madam, withhold these expressions of gratitude. If I fail, which a few hours shall determine, then, as now, rely on Providence to overcome your enemies, in the triumph of justice."

The two absent friends here entered the fisherman's dwelling, when Vincent soothingly addressed his wife, saying—

"I hope you have relented in your determination, and will suffer us to retire until the extent of the besetting danger is ascertained."

Apprehending her reply, and resolved to end this vacillation, O'Grady intervened, declaring—

"I may state with pleasure that Mrs.

Darecourt and myself have arrived at an understanding whereby I agree to place before her the correct details of this malicious scheme, together with the names of the conspirators, and then she will decide what line to follow."

The young bride looked with tearful eyes towards her husband, wherein tracing irresolution he supplicated,—“ Oh, say you are content, dearest; with Eustace I have already chartered the vessel, our only chance lying in immediate departure."

“ Upon the third day," interrupted the Outlaw, “ if Mrs. Darecourt wishes, I promise to conduct her in safety, wherever you may be located in Ireland."

“ Then go, my love," was hastily whispered by Lucy; “ I will try to live without you even for that time."

Unlike the retiring girl of but yesterday,

she now, in the hour of peril, forgot all but her beloved husband.

He told her not to leave the cabin until a conveyance had been procured to take her home to Nevillstown ; that they would sail to Galway, where the Claddagh fishermen were to be relied upon ; but that on the passage along the coast he would write fully, and as soon as O'Grady placed before her the real character of the charge, they could jointly determine whether it was safe to return home at once and proclaim their innocence, or wait until Lord Darecourt had been communicated with.

“ Good-bye, Eustace,” Lucy said softly, presenting him the side of her face, and pressing both his hands warmly, while her black eyes expressed a deep feeling of concern and anxiety. “ It will be only three days until we meet, and you, too, must

promise to write to me when Vincent does."

Their mutual friend, exhausted by the emotion he vainly tried to suppress, without replying, rushed after the Outlaw, who had just gone into the open air.

"Heaven bless you, my darling wife!" sighed Lord Darecourt's son, clasping her to his bosom; "it is but for a few hours we are severed. You must not become dispirited. O'Grady will be your mainstay, and he will not fail in his honest promise. Do not venture forth in the storm; sit here," placing her unresistingly in a low rough chair. "Farewell, Lucy. Try to be calm. Our separation will soon be over:" but she spoke not. "Say that you will not grieve; tell me that, Lucy, and I shall depart tranquillized."

At this moment the voice of the Outlaw was heard proclaiming,—

“ They are hoisting the anchor.”

“ Go ! ” exclaimed the resigned wife.

Her husband was on the threshold, but, turning, he once more rushed back, gazing into those drooping, tearless limpid eyes, while embracing her.

“ Oh, Lucy ! it will break my heart if you do not speak. Only say you will strive not to bewail our unavoidable parting ! ”

“ The anchor is on board, and the smack hauling down by the pier,” came from the outside.

“ Go ! ” Lucy again mechanically uttered, and she was alone.

Her protector stood by her side, but she was not agitated ; nay, she was calm, almost passive, and he thought it was best not to interrupt the current of her musings. Suddenly, however, she started, saying,—

“ Mr. O’Grady, may I ask you to accompany me to the end of the jetty ? ”

“ I would with pleasure, but the night is still very rough, and quite unsuited to such as you.”

With piteous looks she implored his assent; though remaining silent, his kindly nature could not longer resist that mute, pathetic appeal; and, securing her in his comprehensive overcoat, he led her along the unequal granite pier. Restless swayed the numerous fishing-craft to their stone-gripped anchors, but still they slept in peace compared with those two who now silently, arm-in-arm, proceeded to the end of the artificial projection, straining their eyes seawards, where, battling with the tumultuous waves on which it rose and fell, went the small ship, separating Lucy from all she had ever really loved, while beneath them they beheld a capsized yacht

dashing against the rocks, and, almost at their feet, a hat, on which O'Grady deciphered the name "Fanny Chalmers."

"Oh, mercy!" exclaimed Lucy Darecourt, fainting away.

What an eventful day in her young life! a bride—a wife—this morning, and now rent from her husband, reposing lifeless on the bosom of a stranger, and that stranger the notorious Outlaw.

CHAPTER XIII.

It is the fair of Malahide, and stretching away in front as far as the eye can reach stand snowy white tents, with green and red flags proudly waving upon their outside pinnacles, while from within the sound of merry revelry, to the tune of the horn-pipe, jig, or round dance, comes stealing up the gently inclining wooded eminence surrounding the well-chosen spot whereon the fair was held. How many in the days of yore like unto those, now giddy with the excitement of the unwonted mirth, had been there joining in the boisterous hilarity, but where are they now? Gone from this

sphere of transient joy ; nor will they be missed by the capricious crowd assembled there for a brief space of unchecked recreation and merriment. Apples, oranges, hard-boiled eggs, nuts, gingerbread, crubeens, trotters, weak aerated beverages, thick clay pipes with metallic perforated covers, enormous sandwiches, bread, butter, etc., etc., are sold in confusion. Washing-tubs, churns, and other similar articles of domestic use had to be pressed into the service wherein the “porthur” was promptly emptied from the barrels, it being otherwise impossible to supply the ever-recurring demand.

“ ’Tis another haf gallon, av ye plaze.”

The “craythure” was usually retailed from black bottles or stone jars, but on this occasion an innovation therein was attempted which the Reverend Father O’Gorman determined to suppress, and

most effectually he accomplished his purpose.

“The devil you know is bad enough,” muttered his Reverence, “but these arrant codgers must be exterminated.”

Coming to the first vendor of whisky, contained in a round keg erected on a stand, who had done little in the way of business, the people regarding it and the strange vessel with suspicion, the parish priest leaned across the polished apparatus inquiring interestedly,—

“How do you get on?”

“Thrade is very shy, yer Rivirence,” meekly answered with a genuflection.

After a few other observations, Father O’Gorman departed, hoping they would do better.

“He’s the foinest gintleman av a priest I iver know’d yit,” was the opinion of the liquor retailer, until, oh amazement, when

the next customer arrived and he was proceeding to draw a glass, there was none left ; all the time his Reverence had been leaning over the keg, talking so blandly, he had been letting the whisky run away, effectually consigning the illicit trader to future obscurity, so far as Malahide Fair was concerned.

The roundabout swings, rough rocking-horses, together with more real, rollicking asses and ponies, were ready to confer fame upon any aspirant for a dirty coat, or a headache, at prices varying from "two pence to a tin-pinny piece," according to the appearance of worldly prosperity indicated by the ambitious for fame in equine display, and the dexter finger of the proprietor of any one of these games was on the coveted coin almost before the victim had opened his calico bag, or purse made out of a long stocking or the sleeve of an old coat.

The fun on the green was now at its height, when a considerable body of the peasantry suddenly issued from under a tent, stood a minute or two exchanging high angry words, and then suddenly up and down went scores of previously concealed sticks, once, twice, thrice, until some one or more unfortunates bore evidence of spilt blood, whereupon the zeal of both parties being satisfied, the wounded were tenderly carried back for the restoratives already prepared; the primitive faction fight standing adjourned until the next trifling provocation witnessed a renewal of the recent fracas.

To a particular booth, the largest and most crowded in the fair, wherein the scene was one of unabated mirth and jocularity, we must now direct attention. The fiddler and harpist were industriously plodding away, with bow and fingers as on that

square wooden platform fronting them the dancers responded, while a little lower down another party and yet a third group still more remote waxed warm and merry to the stimulating sounds of the well-known "Fox-hunters' Jig." The proprietor faced the itinerant musicians with the counter between ; and along each side of the capacious tent a firm, continuous bench extended, the roof being sustained by joists or wooden rafters lying transversely, and fastened to the ground with pegs, having ropes attached. Empty barrels upholding planks on the top were placed about indiscriminately, answering the purpose of tables or receptacles for the various measures, plates, pipes, etc.

It was almost at the close of the day, and in the very plenitude of the festivity in this booth, that the dancers were violently upset, barrels overturned, the bar, pro-

prietor, musicians, and crowd all levelled alike to the ground, while the very pavilion caved in as its principal beams, ropes, and supports were torn away, screams of terror mixing with cries of "Save O'Grady, save the Outlaw," "Down wid the sowldiers," "Out wid the garrions," and so on. The obnoxious red-coats lay labouring and struggling in that living sea of stifling perturbation, whither they had chased the rebel, when the tent was borne down upon them all. Creeping on the soft earth, the fugitive by tremendous power fast drew ahead, nearing that faint glimmer of daylight revealed at the end of the canvas, towards which all were confusedly struggling.

At length emerging from the pandemonium and motioning to the sympathizing crowd outside to repress their jubilations and keep back, he threw off his coat,

placing himself in an expectant attitude. As the first soldier, almost lifeless, appeared, the gun was wrenched from his hands by the Outlaw, and thrown to the peasantry, who stood confronting the military with menacing scowls, until one by one the whole escort had been disarmed, as though they were so many children.

“I want no parley, sir,” continued the pursued to their leader. “You do your duty. My terms are simple : deliver up your ammunition, and I will restore the flints, or keep it and I shall retain them despite all your efforts.”

“We can do neither,” was the surly reply.

“You must if I am so minded,” exclaimed O’Grady, crossing over to where the soldiers doggedly stood, the peasantry beginning to follow ; “Go hence, my valued friends ; I desire no bloodshed,

and to guard against the possibility of it, I shall have the ammunition. Come," he proceeded, raising his proud figure to its full height, and confronting the military: "here I stand a man before men, or who ought to be such, and I offer you this chance: abandon these arms, try unassisted to take me prisoner, and if I do not conquer you one and all, I beseech you to dismiss me from a world dishonoured by my presence."

Father O'Gorman now softly moved forward, saying, "I have heard something of this affair, let me speak a word to you, sir, in private," addressing the leader of the soldiers, who retired a short distance with the priest. Returning in a few moments, the ammunition was destroyed, and the guns given back to their owners, notwithstanding the evident chagrin of the people.

“Away to your honest merriment,” besought the Outlaw, “and be happy while you can ; a short turn may lead to the path of sorrow.”

The speaker’s earnestness greatly saddened the peasantry, who pleaded,—

“Make him sthay, Father O’Gorman, make him sthay, yer Rivirence ; shure he must perish av he goes an farther.”

With curiosity even the soldiers look on now, as the pastor of the people observed entreatingly,—

“You hear them, Mr. O’Grady, they pity you—would die for you : why deny them their request ? Oh, do not abandon yourself to a living tomb.”

“My good father,” he answered, taking the priest’s hand warmly, “because that I love poor Ireland you see me thus ; yet for this self-same reason, you say these people would die for me, and I know their

sincerity; am I not then requited for all I have endured, ay, and shall endure, before I succumb? No, no," he added passionately; "dead they may take me, but only when lifeless."

"Why not leave the country for a time?" was urged.

"What, forsake the green, sunny land of my birth? Never, never. Farewell, my heroic friends, I am not of your faith, yet since finding a resting-place under the starry dome of night, I have often thought it were best to err, as you do, if erring it be, in ascribing too much—rather than too little—of our every-day life to a watchful Providence."

As O'Grady turned to disappear in the wood, he saw the peasantry receiving the priestly benediction, at the solemn sound of the Angelus, when uncovering he sighed, "A good man's blessing is not lost on high."

CHAPTER XIV.

“ I HOPE you are well, my friend,” were the greeting phrases of Robert Arkwright to his *confrère*, Brien Flynn, as he pushed a chair towards him.

The latter ensconced himself therein, answering,—

“ Toidy in health, thank ye, but virry anxshus about other matthers.”

“ Ha ! anything unusual, Brien ? ” was asked across the table.

“ Well, av coorse ye’ve heer’d Dorrington Darecoort an Miss Chalmers wint away in the yawt, an’ havn’t bin seen since ? ”

“ I am aware of that,—is there anything further ? ”

“Throth, an’ there is,” replied the visitor demurely.

“Name it,” inquired Arkwright, in an anxious voice.

“The yawt has bin found turn’d upside-down!”

“But Darecourt and Miss Chalmers?” was tremulously exclaimed.

“Bedad, there’s nayther tale nor tidin’s av thim, I’m sorry to say,” and Flynn positively did look sorry.

“Good God! they’re drowned to a certainty,” came from Arkwright in blank surprise.

“’Tis a bad job for me av they are,” observed the Darecourt deputy, doggedly looking towards the small fire; “bud I don’t surrindhur ivery hope for all that.”

“Why so, Flynn?”

“Bekayze Fanny Chalmers is not the

sort av a girl to cut her sthick in a hurry, or I'm grately misthaken."

"You build more on her than on this young spark Darecourt?"

"Whew!" said Flynn, expelling the air through his projecting closed lips, "d'ye think I hadn't me eyes about whin I kep pushin' him an to the marriage?" The speaker added with energy, "I'll sthake an even hunder'd goolden guineas, barrin' axidints, she'll make him marry her an' thin wayre the breeches."

"Ha! ha! you are graphic in your description. Still, the consideration ought to be which of the two will best suit your views."

"She will, av coorse," spoken with determination. "He moight alther, bud wanst she gits him undher her thumb, he darn't budge; thin will be me time to let her know she has me to take into account,

an' shure I'll throw her a remindher 'twor I med the love-match, though bethune us two, poor Dorrington 'll find she's a lucifer," and Flynn laughed heartily at his attempted humour.

"There is no fear of Lord Darecourt suddenly relenting or changing towards his only son?"

"No, Misther Arkwright, bud it wor a close shave had we not met him the noight I left ye whin dhriving to the City in his sthate coach, an' thin he gev us lots av throuble."

"Yes, that was a lucky encounter. Yet even now he might soften, and bring back Vincent."

"No; his marriage wid Miss Neville dhruv the last nail in Misther Vincent's coffin."

"This ought not to be," responded Arkwright. "Miss Neville belongs to

one of the best families in Ireland, besides being possessed of extensive property."

"Ye forgit I tould a far diffirint sthory to his lordship, who belayvs her to be some low-bred huzzy his son tuck out av the toide. As regards the property id now belongs to her husband, and ye must help me to git the government to say-questhrate id; for so long as they hav money we musth expict throuble; whin they're paupers we sthand a chance av shuttin' thim up altogether."

"I will easily accomplish that task for you. Has Lord Darecourt accepted this nephew yet as his heir?" added Arkwright.

"'Tis too soon. I'm dhrivin' home the wedge in Dorrington's favour, but id requires delicat handlin. His lordship has a waykeness for Vincent sthill, though whin ye touch his pride, he'd banish him

at that minnit no matther how soon afther he repints."

"I commend your skilful manœuvring, persevere and have all ship-shape when the old Lord dies to proclaim young Dorrington his successor. By the way, how does the lonely man wear his age?"

"Sometimes I think, Misther Arkwright, as how he'd giv us a suddin shlip, thin he pulls up wondherful like, bud I know his son's affair is bringin' him near the grave sooner nor he wud av he hadn't id to worry him."

"Be on your guard that he leaves no unexpected writing which might upset your calculations."

"'Tis little he throubl's his pin, an' that little I take good care av when it shutes me purpose."

"Capital, Brien; you are prepared for whatever happens."

“Ay,” muttered the Darecourt agent gleefully; “I’ve a rigilar set av dockie-mints to take the plaice av anythin’ the Lord may write, even an attistid will; an’ av Mither Dorrington turns an me he’ll foind they’re not the thrue wans afther all, tho’ they’ll do for him excipt he compils me to pordhuce the originals, which I’ll do in self-defince so shure as I’m sittin’ where ye see me.”

“It is but natural that in our respective positions between landlord and tenant we should take care of the interests of both, at the same time well guarding our own,” responded Arkwright, accompanying the remark with a knowing wink of the left eye, which his *confrère* appreciably understood, replying with a dry laugh,—

“Honesty begins at home. Ha! ha!”

A knock at the door interrupted these worthies.

“Come in!” exclaimed the host, demanding, as the domestic presented herself, “What is it?”

“There’s a gentleman waitin’ for ye, sir.”

“Oh! I’m engaged,” in a vexatious voice, “far too busy to see any one.”

As the servant was retiring he asked if she knew who it was that wanted him.

“I don’t, sir; bud he sed as how he cum’s from the Castle.”

“What!” exclaimed her employer wrathfully; “how dare you bring only half a message, and that the least important part?”

“Bekayze ye tuck the wind out av me,” was stoutly rejoined.

“Get away, leave my sight this moment. The idea of keeping a government courier waiting, it is monstrous. Excuse me, Brien, for a few moments,” said Arkwright, following the retreating menial.

“Ah ! don’t minshun id,” was borne to the ears of Sir Mervyn Mervyn’s agent, while the representative of the Darecourt property lolled back in the chair, thinking who could this messenger be from the vice-regal court.

“I’d give a thrifle to larn,” he mused, “this Arkwright’s a deep card, knowin’ purty well all about me own affairs, yit he niver throubl’s me wid his. Begor, I’ll pump him dhry av I git a chance whin he returns.”

It was not long before Robert Arkwright came back and resumed his seat, but so changed in look, his quivering face being preternaturally white, that Brien Flynn, throwing up both hands, cried out in alarm,—

“Grate powers, what’s amiss ? What ails you ? Sphake, man, sphake out ; I’m awful narvous.”

“There,” answered the former in rapid accents, “read that!” throwing on the table Mrs. Arkwright’s letter to the Outlaw, which the latter had dropped when decamping from Dublin Castle on the fleet steed unwittingly provided by his Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant.

“What a strange thing,” observed the Darecourt deputy, “for your wife to have done!”

“This then accounts for her long silence since she left me to revisit her English relatives, which was evidently a mere pretext for escaping,” pointing to the note.

“Hav ye no family?” inquired the visitor.

“None.”

“Thin lit her go, an stharta agin.”

“What do you mean, Flynn?”

“Wives are chaype, buy another wid a o’rthune—a toidy lot ’ll be wantin’ ye

whin the world knows ye're a bachelor, ha! ha!"

To do Robert Arkwright justice it must be chronicled that the greenest spot, indeed the only possible oasis in his desert-like life was an approximation to a feeling of kindness for his English wife, who, if not fascinating or handsome, was yet withal truly good, her meekness and unselfishness gradually extorting from her husband a regard he did not deem himself to be capable of until now, when for the first time he felt she was lost to him, and that through the Outlaw.

"Ah, curse you, O'Grady," he exclaimed aloud, "I will be even with you before long. She idly asks for mercy, but you will beg mine, and I shall scorn the petition—nay, loathe and condemn you in your utter helplessness."

"Yer not plazed wid the double he gev

the sowldiers at Malahide Fair," jocosely observed the Darecourt agent.

"I have an undying incentive now beside which the five hundred guineas reward pales into nothingness."

"Begor, id is a lot av money," was feelingly suggested.

"Not now, Brien. I would cheerfully add as much from myself to see the villain hung, drawn, and quartered."

"'Twar not his fault av yer wife left ye."

"It is his fault," the host rejoined vehemently, "to enable him to baffle justice she becomes severed from her husband, and I shall avenge the blow."

"Shure an' so wud I in throth, av I wor in yer plaice, an' that saym's aizely don be marryin' the first daycint girl ye meet havin' suffishunt money to make id worth yer while."

"Why do not you get spliced, if you

esteem marriage so highly?" was inquired in a bantering voice.

"Who knows I won't?"

"When may your friends expect to hear of the desirable event?"

"As soon as Lord Darecoort's dead, his nephew Dorrington in his plaice, an' mesel' bound for Ameriky, or anywhere out av this ghost-like country, wid all me hard arnins shnug in me pockit, thin whin the world lies at me feet, nayther givin' nortakin' favors, shud her money float near high wather-mark, I'll marry id av not hersel'."

"Come," said Arkwright, starting to his feet, "give me your hand: you want my services to follow this Vincent Darecourt and his wife to the death?"

"Simple enof whin their credit an' money's gon."

"Very well, I will undertake this for you, Brien."

“Bravo!”

“Yes, and more on one condition,” continued the former.

“Nayme id, Misther Arkwright.”

“That you help in having O’Grady captured, promise this, and even to-night the first steps shall be taken to secure the sequestration of the Neville property.”

“There’s me fist an id, bud how am I to begin? Dorrington’s not here now, nor dar he play wid the Outlaw a sicond time.”

“Your friend kept his word by inveigling the mad rebel to Malahide Fair, when the officer foolishly would not adopt my advice and have him shot at once, so, as you are aware, O’Grady turned the tables on the soldiers; but with the same chance again, I vow that I myself will bring him down as I would a piping finch.”

“It may be so, Misther Arkwright, yit

I can't see how ye are to git at him for the sphort."

"Merely by your telling me where Dorrington Darecourt and he used to meet."

"At Wentworth Waste."

"What a horrible spot!" exclaimed Sir Mervyn Mervyn's factotum.

"Didn't ye know as how 'twor his home?" asked the visitor incredulously.

"That dreadful, lonely churchyard and ruins?"

"The sayme."

"Are you certain of this, Brien?"

"All av the people cud have told ye so, bud beyand this ye hav id now from his own lips; thinkin' Dorrington wor Misther Vincent, he kep no saycrit from him av any sart."

"That suffices for my purpose. I will drive off to the Castle, and arrange for fifty picked veterans to meet me in the

morning at the fatal place, when he must be surrounded before there is time for escape."

"Thin I wish ye good luck."

"Success is a certainty. I will obtain permission for these soldiers to act upon my instructions alone, and when we have seen the last of the disloyal villain, I shall seek my wife, show her this letter, and offer to take her home again. Once I entice her back, she will never find an opportunity of writing about her husband to another outlaw," and the heated speaker wrung his hands in a menacing, resolved mood.

"Good day, yer honour," uttered a meek voice as the door opened gently, revealing the well-known, disliked form of Dominick O'Sullivan.

"What seek you here, vile ruffian?" hoarsely demanded Arkwright

“ Sthrong words, sir, to an hanest ould man,” returned the white-haired visitor who had absorbed so much attention in the French capital upon a recent occasion, and who now stood meekly before the dreaded middleman.

“ You went on a long wild-goose journey, to see Sir Mervyn Mervyn, expecting that such wretched scruff would be permitted to pollute his presence,” the agent furiously aspirated.

“ Bud, God bless him ! the landlord did see me for all that.”

“ Liar ! he did not. I have heard from the baronet since, and your name is not even alluded to.”

“ Av coorse ; I’m too far below the likes av him to be noticed, Misther Arkwright ! ”

“ But I have not forgotten, as will be proved to your cost, and I only waited

our meeting to say that forthwith I shall evict you and every one belonging to you, kith and kin, driving the lot into the highway, without house or home."

"Shure I'll thry to pay ye, sir, as I hav always don—"

"I want revenge, not money; and when every other tenant feels my hand they may blame you, nor will I pause in the process of vengeance until you fall wholly exhausted."

"Quite right," jubilantly chorused the Darecourt deputy, "av this is the vagabone who had the impartinince to intherfere wid the landlord. What consayt, ye old malefacthor!"

"I know ye, Misther Flynn," was patiently responded, "yer a grate body, now, bud there wor a day whin av ye sed haf as much, I'd hav dhrawn ye through the muddy bed av the dirthy Tolka."

In another instant Arkwright had

seized the aged man by the neck, muttering with passionate fervour,—

“Down on your knees, and humbly beg pardon of that gentleman,” pointing to Brien Flynn, “or this moment I will raze your holding to the ground, leaving neither stick nor stone to tell where a human being once had dwelt.”

“Sir Marvyn Marvyn—” began the tenant, whom the agent again assailed, shouting,—

“Perish both you and the landlord ! I will do as I please.”

“Base scoundrel, you shall not,” was peremptorily rejoined, and the young baronet strode into the apartment.

CHAPTER XV.

“THE wood my home, the silent moss-grown grave my cheerless couch, the purblind owl and sinuous ivy my only mates, while the wayward shadows from out these ruined walls light me to my lonely pillow. The voice of God against me, and the face of humanity turned aside at the mere sound of my name, shut out from all that is kindred in nature, as though my very form would set the war-dogs of hell loose to track me to a merciless revenge.

“Turn I east or west, north or south, the warnings of my enemies everywhere confront me, each verdant space, swelling

stream, or scented meadow being shunned by the Vampire on whom Society has traced in ensanguined lines, 'Thou shalt not live.'

"The stars by night no longer sparkle in their diamond-studded firmament as was their wont when first I sought forgetfulness in gazing on their giddy height, nor does the moon smile as of yore with a light that made me content to look from the mound on which I tried to repose contemplating these memorials of the past, replete with busy undying suggestions.

"Once I had a home blessed by a parent's smile which failed not in my infantile grief, but broadened and quickened at the thought of my tiny, unreal apprehensions ; if the shadow of a care hovered o'er me, was not her maternal benevolence already at hand to brush aside the uprising fear ? and who but a mother could

have understood the frenzy of my heart's delight, when from her first remembered illness she grew well again?

"Then, as before, we traced the flight of years not by inroads of iron time but by the additions it brought to our stores of mutual happiness, the only solid joy ever known in this otherwise arid world.

"Now came an evil blight, when discord rose darkly up and an unholy strife was waged, dividing heart from heart,—mother from son,—since that fell hour we have been mortally sundered, I never looked upon her face again."

O'Grady bent his head and wept, while all that was sympathetic in real and inorganic nature seemed to become augmented at the picture of supreme misery thus presented.

"Then," he dreamily resumed, "begin the black records of my life—a prison—

the scaffold, and my emancipation by a grateful Saxon, wife of an abased Celt. Again, I stand before my childhood's mansion of bliss, but no one welcomes the fallen patriot, nay the voice of the stranger warns the fugitive away—he is unknown. With the incentive of a public reward stimulating some wretch to saturate himself in my blood, I flee to this my future home, Wentworth Waste ; here I hold my undisturbed and unattended vigils, save when the weird aërial fiends of the night crawl up from the vapour-clad wood, to lull me with their silvery mists.

“ Yet oh, why am I consigned to this warfare which mocks that society, arrayed against me ? In all things I have acted from a true conviction and sense of honour, claiming heaven as a witness to my patriotism, ay,” he proceeded with intense earnestness, “ in the cause of Ireland, my

sunny hopes of a bright exalted future have been blanched and withered, but it is nobler thus to die, sanctified in falling, than live a slave ! ”

Sitting on that semi-decayed landmark of some departed one, the Outcast buried his face in his hands, while wearily oscillating to and fro, unmindful of all passing around. Suddenly he jumped to his feet as a hand was lightly laid upon his shoulder, and turned to behold Lucy Darecourt standing nervously before him.

“ Good morning, Mr. O’Grady,” she said with a warm smile of interest, “ I hope you are well, and will understand the cause of my anxiety to see you ? ”

“ I dare not be unwell,” he responded, easily returning her graceful salutation, “ whenever illness robs me of the power of action, my winding-sheet is being smoothed and folded ; but I forget,” handing

her a parcel, " here are the original letters upon which this treasonable charge against your husband is founded."

" Oh ! astonishment ! How did you become possessed of them ? " she inquired eagerly.

" By paying a personal visit to his Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant," he answered satirically.

" The Lord-Lieutenant ! " was echoed in amazement.

" Yes, I called upon the Viceroy, hoping in some way to become informed of the names of our mutual enemies, and, as you see, his Excellency was so considerate as to put me in possession of the only existing evidence against the accused."

" But surely permission was not given you to remove them ? " she interrogated in innocent surprise.

" Madam ! rest content. I did not wait

for the viceregent's honoured sanction," smiling; "however, this is digressing; let us now consider what is the best course to pursue."

"Thank you, Mr. O'Grady, for reminding me that there is no time to lose; have you read these papers?"

"I have."

"Then what is your opinion respecting them?"

"That it is a skilfully constructed fraud, founded on some unguarded communications of mine which fell into the hands of organized bandits."

"What do you kindly advise?"

"As no implicating testimony can now be adduced, I would urge the accused to return, and demand a public inquiry into the nefarious scheme."

"Shall we seek them forthwith?"

"Certainly, Mrs. Darecourt, recall them

at once, and circumvent these plotters ere they know of our signal gain. I am at your command with pleasure when we learn where your husband is to be found."

"Oh," she exclaimed eagerly, "I received a voluminous letter last night, wherein he states the resolve of himself and Eustace Dillon to abide among the fishermen on the Arran Islands until we communicate with them and concert a future line of action."

"Then, dear madam, my suggestion is that we post to Galway, and bring them back without delay."

"I am ready this moment," she warmly affirmed; "when will it suit your convenience to come, Mr. O'Grady?"

"At nightfall."

"Oh, pray say earlier, or it will be one day lost."

"The Outlaw may list to the hoot of

the night-bird or the boding of the sea-mew, but he dare not look upon that sun above except by stealth and in solitude," was solemnly answered.

"Ah me! when is your cruel punishment to have an end?"

"When from a gibbet I dangle for the delectation of the bloodhounds who are hunting me down," he uttered fiercely, adding gently, "Mrs. Darecourt, at nightfall I will wait you at the Gap of Donnycarney. Peruse these documents, and form your own judgment upon the extent and method of the plot. Now I must depart; my personal safety may be already compromised by tarrying," and raising her hand to his lips he lightly touched it, repeating, "Nightfall, at the Gap of Donnycarney."

"The Gap of Donnycarney," she echoed, retiring from his sight.

The Recluse of the Waste looked in the

direction whither that young wife had gone, musing aloud, "If I only compass your happiness, I shall care but little how soon my end has come."

"It has come now," was furiously yelled close to his ear, and turning he beheld fifty regular troops, their pointed guns almost touching him, while in their midst, livid with passionate revenge, stood Robert Arkwright, wringing his hands in a frenzy of excitement.

"Kill me and I will be glad, but you shall never take me alive," said the Outlaw in a lofty imperious strain, his face lit by a contemptuous smile while calmly surveying the many confronting him.

"Surrender," roared Arkwright.

"Haste and shoot me down, I will not surrender," was fearlessly rejoined, throwing up his arms and exposing that broad swelling breast as the unfaltering target.

The agent did not want to have him summarily executed, longing for the spectacle of a hanging orgie, besides there were five hundred guineas to be gained by capturing the rebel alive ; thus half soothingly he observed,—

“Give yourself up quietly, and I will commend you to the gracious mercy of the government.”

“Much as I despise your threats I spurn your clemency more ; greet my heart with a score of welcome bullets, but until then the first who attempts to place a dishonouring hand upon me shall feel the force of a man’s resistance,” vociferated the Outcast, drawing in his arms and balancing himself like a lion crouched for a terrific spring.

“This absurdity must have an end,” Arkwright retorted, observing the dissatisfied looks of the listeners, adding as

a final palaver, "Yield quietly, and state your own conditions."

"To whom, pray?" O'Grady asked coldly.

"To me," answered the agent with rapidity.

An odd light stole into the captive's piercing eyes as he said complaisantly,—
"I will name my terms to you, sir, in private."

"Why not declare them openly before these soldiers?"

"A useless question to put to him whom you know to be a gentleman," uttered with hauteur.

"For how long do you wish to confer with me?"

"Two minutes."

"Where?"

"Anywhere," continuing, "that place will suffice, and it is nearest," pointing

to the ruin outside of which they were standing.

“Are you armed?”

“Yes, I always carry pistols.”

“Then deliver them up, and I shall listen to you therein for two minutes.”

“I will abandon nothing,” O’Grady determinedly announced, “but there,” and instantly he blew the contents of the firearms into the air, returning them to his belt.

“That will do,” exclaimed his satisfied antagonist; “but remember I am likewise provided, and in case of treachery the soldiers will surround you.”

“Bah! you know how little I regard yourself or your puny weapons, but to assure tranquillity post the escort close up to the walls, then you need not fear.”

“I fear nothing,” avowed Arkwright with a jaunty air, which, however, was not

sustained, as, almost immediately after, he pleaded, "give me your word of honour that you mean no treachery."

"What, the word of honour of an outlaw?" laughed the rebel with severity; "proceed to the gaol," he continued. "I will bandy words no further."

Sir Mervyn Mervyn's agent was now in this dilemma, that the soldiers by their looks plainly indicated belief in the fairness of the prisoner's offer, and that rejection of it would be attributed to cowardice.

"Go on," he said, his face growing white and yellow alternately. "I will join you, but recollect, I am prepared for resistance, and that my followers shall surround the place to prevent your escape."

With a haughty mien, and a look of withering contempt towards the agent,

under which the latter visibly winced, O'Grady entered the abbey attended by this deputy, the detachment guarding every aperture or means of exit, listening anxiously with bated breath.

Some few seemingly interminable moments had already elapsed, and the escort were beginning to look at each other mutely in silent, concerned surprise, when a deep hollow thud sounded upon their ears, accompanied by a faint shriek, and a resonant mocking voice reverberated throughout the edifice proclaiming,—

“Robert Arkwright is the Outlaw's prisoner. Ha! ha! ha!”

Instantly the soldiers swarmed in and out of the ruins, through every disused corner or forsaken spot, each hollow in the crumbling walls, the floor, the trees, but all was still as the surrounding haunts of the dead, and the exhaustive

yet fruitless search being at length abandoned, they departed, solitude and desolation once more reigning supreme at Wentworth Waste.

END OF VOL. II.

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